

ഭാരതത്തിന്റെ ആദ്ധ്യാത്മികജ്ഞാനവും സാംസ്കാരികപൈതൃകവും പരിപോഷിപ്പിക്കുകയും പ്രചരിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന മഹദ്ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ, അവയുടെ മൂല്യവും വ്യക്തതയും ഒട്ടും ചോർന്നുപോകാതെതന്നെ, നൂതന സാങ്കേതികവിദ്യ ഉപയോഗിച്ച് പരിരക്ഷിക്കുകയും ജിജ്ഞാസുകൾക്ക് സൗജന്യമായി പകർന്നുകൊടുക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുക എന്ന ശ്രേയസ് ഫൗണ്ടേഷന്റെ ലക്ഷ്യ സാക്ഷാത്കാരമാണ് ശ്രേയസ് ഓൺലൈൻ ഡിജിറ്റൽ ലൈബ്രറി.

ഗ്രന്ഥശാലകളുടെയും ആദ്ധ്യാത്മിക പ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങളുടെയും വ്യക്തികളുടെയും സഹകരണത്തോടെ കോർത്തിണക്കിയിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ ഓൺലൈൻ ലൈബ്രറിയിൽ അപൂർവ്വങ്ങളായ വിശിഷ്ടഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ സ്കാൻചെയ്ത് മികവാർന്ന ചെറിയ പി ഡി എഫ് ഫയലുകളായി ലഭ്യമാക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇവ കമ്പ്യൂട്ടറിലോ പ്രിന്റ് ചെയ്തോ എളുപ്പത്തിൽ വായിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്.

ശ്രേയസ് ഓൺലൈൻ ഡിജിറ്റൽ ലൈബ്രറിയിൽ ലഭ്യമായ ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ വ്യക്തിപരമായ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്കുവേണ്ടി സൗജന്യമായി ഉപയോഗിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. എന്നാൽ വാണിജ്യപരവും മറ്റുമായ കാര്യങ്ങൾക്കായി ഇവ ദുരുപയോഗം ചെയ്യുന്നത് തീർച്ചയായും അനുവദനീയമല്ല.

ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥശേഖരത്തിന് മുതൽക്കൂട്ടായ ഈ പുണ്യഗ്രന്ഥത്തിന്റെ രചയിതാവിനും പ്രകാശകർക്കും നന്ദി രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു.

ശ്രേയസ് ഓൺലൈൻ ഡിജിറ്റൽ ലൈബ്രറിയെക്കുറിച്ചും ശ്രേയസ് ഫൗണ്ടേഷനെക്കുറിച്ചും കൂടുതൽ വിവരങ്ങൾ അറിയാനും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ പങ്കാളിയാകാനും ശ്രേയസ് വെബ്സൈറ്റ് സന്ദർശിക്കുക.

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Ezhuttachan's

HARINAAMA KIRTANAM

ODE TO HARI



VISWANATH KURUP

EZHUTTACHAN'S

HARINAAMAKIRTANAM

ODE TO *HARI*

VISWANATH KURUP

Ezhuttachan's Harinaamakirtanam Ode to *Hari*

by

Viswanath P. Kurup

English

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PREFACE

Like many others of the *Hindu* families in Kerala, I also grew up hearing and chanting *Harinaamakirtanam*. As a child I was exposed to the ardent penance and austerities my mother observed on every Sunday and all other auspicious days of the *Hindu* calender. Chanting *Harinaamakirtanam* was part and parcel of her daily routine. Although I had not understood at that time anything beyond the literal meaning of these verses, I developed a special attraction to it in later years. Eventually, when my spiritual proclivities were awakened by the metaphysical thoughts and philosophy of *Veda*s and *Vedaanta*, I began grasping the message increasingly clearly. It was at the time of the Indian Independence movement, when high ethical values were fostered and practised by the National leaders and the soul-stirring philosophy of Marxism seeped into the society that the dream of ideal democracy blossomed in me, a dream which eventually led me to the sacred precincts of *Vedaanta*, the scriptures and their contemperory proponents. This awakening in me led to a concerted effort to study *Harinaamakirtanam* written by the great *Aachaarya, Ezhuttachan*, centuries ago in pure *Malayaalam*. *Harinaamakirtanam* is the quintessence of all spirituality accessible to one and all, irrespective of caste, creed or status. All the paths that lead to realization of God, the Truth that pervades all and lies beyond all, the *Brahman - Bhakti* (Devotion), *Jnaana* (Knowledge) and *Karma* (Action) - are depicted forcefully and elegantly in these simple verses. For the past three decades, our family has been including *Harinaamakirtanam* in our weekly prayers. The present work constitutes a humble attempt to bring to an audience not well-versed in the *Malayaalam* language, some glimpses of the beauty and grandeur of the philosophy which it expounds.

Many individuals have encouraged me and helped me in accomplishing this humble attempt to translate *Harinaamakirtanam* to English. I acknowledge with gratitude the service rendered by them. Owing to constraints of space, I cannot hope

to mention even their names here. I hope they would understand and forgive. However, I cannot but mention the following great souls without whose help this work would not have seen the light of day: They include Swami Amitabhananda, Swami Jyotirmayananda, Shri Srikant, Dr Sita Nambiar and Professor Achutan. Two special persons in my life deserve my immense gratefulness: my brother Shri Damodara Kurup, with his ever-flowing love, who mentored me through out my life and my brother-in-law Dr Gopinathan Nair ever armed with his helping hand to clear all impediments. Last but not the least, I am extremely thankful to my wife, children and grandchildren for their unfailing inspiration and infinite patience. We chant these verses together every Sunday.

A special word of thanks to Swami Kaivalyananda for going through the manuscript and agreeing to publish this translation.

I submit this humble translation at the lotus feet of *Shri Ramakrishna* whose thoughts and philosophy which flowed through the writings of *Swami Vivekananda* attracted me to *Vedaanta*. The enthusiasm which sprouted was fostered and nurtured through the tutelage of *Maata Amritaanandamayi*. All the greatness of the work is that of the *Aachaarya*, but the deficiencies and mistakes that remain in this interpretation are solely mine. What I learned from my beloved mother about *Harinaamakirtanam*, I now submit solemnly before my readers.

With my humble salutations

VISWANATH KURUP

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

When Dr Viswanatha Kurup approached me with the request that his commentary in English on *Harinaamakirtanam* be published from this *ashrama*, I was more than happy to accept it. I have known him as an ardent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna besides being a sincere well-wisher of this *ashrama*. Professional service took Dr Kurup to America years ago; but, all along he was firmly rooted in our *punya-bhoomi*, the blessed land of philosophy, religion and spirituality. His visits to India, more than happy home-coming, were pilgrimages to the holy shrines here.

Spiritual indifference to our cultural heritage has often passed muster for the so-called modernism or progressivism with our educated elite. Dr Kurup, however, has always been of the view that our education will be complete only with the study of our religious literature, the pure and perennial fountain-head of our ancient wisdom. From its vast and varied treasure, the gem that Dr Kurup chose to cherish lovingly and long was *Harinaamakirtanam*, the celebrated hymn composed by *Tunchattu Ezhuttachan*. His mother taught him the exquisite lyric during his early childhood and he continued to chant it along with the family at prayer-time. He grew up with the hymn which was the cradle of an awareness or awakening of the religious feeling in him.

Harinaamakirtanam can be looked upon both as a devotional song and a treatise on *Advaita Vedaanta*. However, if the title of the composition is any indication, it is a hymn, pure and simple, in glorification, not so much of Lord *Hari* as of His sacred names. Chanting His many names is pointed out as the easiest and the surest way of reaching God, particularly for the vast majority of the people living in this wicked *Kali Yuga*. There is no harm in believing that the burden of this devotional song is the power and glory of God's name. In this hymn, it is the poet's prayer for God's grace and blessing to enable him to remember God and to chant His names at all times.

On the other hand, there is the view held by eminent scholars that the hymn deals with the *Advaita* philosophy. They argue that the central theme of the work is *Jnaana* or the experiential understanding that we are the Self, the indweller in all beings and the intrinsic integrality in all the things of the universe. The Self alone is and the world of plurality is only a superimposition of unreal names and forms on it. This is wisdom or perfect gnosis gained by the cultivation of dispassion and discriminate thinking. References to the other systems of philosophy are made only to reinforce the faith in *Advaita* as the one infallible, guiding principle for the liberation of the soul. The touch of devotion, seen in the last line of each stanza – *Naaraayanaaya namah* -, is very much as in Shri Shankara's *Dakshinaamoortty-Stotram*. More than a hymn, *Harinaamakirtanam* is, in fact, an *Upanishat* in Malayalam.

Dr Viswanatha Kurup's commentary on *Harinaamakirtanam* is seen inclined to this school of interpretation pioneered by such luminaries as H.H. Swami Jnaanananda Saraswathi, Dr P.K.Narayana Pillai and Prof. G Balakrishnan Nair. Dr Kurup has brought his vast reading and research extending over several years to bear upon this learned and lucid commentary on *Harinaammakirtanam*. I am sure that this work will be the first of a series of such well-thought-out and well-written books from Dr Kurup. I hope and pray that this book will be a great blessing to the English-reading students of *Vedaantic* literature.

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CHAPTER 1

HARINAAMAKIRTANAM AND ITS COMPOSER

Harinaamakirtanam is a mellifluous devotional song in adoration of Lord *Hari*, the Supreme. This hymn, rich in philosophical and spiritual content, composed by the seventeenth century seer, *Ezhuttachan*, the *Aachaarya* (preceptor) of spiritual awakening, contains sixtysix stanzas, written in chaste *Malayaalam*, the native tongue of the Malabaar Coast now known as Kerala. Till the *Aachaarya*'s times *Malayaalam* had few devotional and philosophical writings in prose or poetry, *Sanskrit* having been in those periods the medium of scholarly discourse. The *Aachaarya*'s period witnessed the blossoming of writings in *Malayaalam*, mostly on devotional and spiritual themes, *Harinaamakirtanam* being the crowning jewel and the sublimest among them all.

Harinaamakirtanam means praise to the name of *Hari*, the *Almighty Mahaa Vishnu, (Naaraayana)*, the Lord supreme. Every stanza in *Harinaamakirtanam* ends with the words *Naaraayanaaya Namah*, obeisance to *Naaraayana*, the Supreme Lord. Its appeal to the masses and the elite alike was so profound that it soon spread to all the corners of Kerala by word of mouth in that era when the printing press and the other means of mass communication had not yet appeared. Its popularity has not withered with the passage of time. Every *Hindu* home in Kerala holds *Harinaamakirtanam* sacred and includes its verses in its daily prayers.

Ezuttachan, the father of the modern *Malayaalam* literature, is revered by all *Malaayalis*, irrespective of caste or creed. His other major *Malayaalam* contributions to *Hindu* devotional literature include translations of the epics of *Raamaayanam, Mahaabhaaratam* and *Bhaagavatam*, from their *Sanskrit* originals. The translation of *Raamaayanam*, known as *Adhyaatma* (Metaphysical) *Raamaayanam*, is renowned for its lucidity, profundity and spirituality. Born to a non-*Braahmana* caste and

denied of access to spiritual knowledge, *Ezuttachan* defied all caste taboos and nonchalantly took the message of the spiritual texts to the masses of non-*Braahmanas*.

Ezuttachan composed the lyric *Harinaamakirtanam* in dulcet, but profound, verses for daily prayer by the young and the old alike at dawn and dusk. *Naama-japam*, recital of the names of the god-heads, has been, and continues to be, the *Hindu* routine and has proved a sure source of sublime calm and quiet of mind.

The life and time of *Ezuttachan* is shrouded in obscurity. The places and the dates of his birth and death are not known. Little information is available on his parentage. *Ezhuttachan* had not mentioned his name as the author in his numerous works, a practice wont with most authors of his times and earlier epochs, following the example set by the great *Veda Vyaasa* (meaning the systematist of metaphysical knowledge). Naturally, therefore, there do exist differences of opinion among scholars about the authorship of some of the works of the period, attributed to him. Of course, there are stray references in his works to their *Kaliyuga* (the last of the aeons according to the *Hindu* aeonic calendar) dates, a clue from which scholars have deduced that *Ezhuttachan* lived in the seventeenth century AD. *Ezhuttachan* pays obeisance and dedicates his work, to his *guru* (Preceptor), *Nilakantha Somayaaji.*

By *Ezhuttachan*'s times, Hinduism had fallen from the great heights of spiritualism it had reached earlier, to profane depths of ritualism. Superstition had displaced faith. Scholarship remained the exclusive preserve of *Braahmanas* who formed a miniscule proportion of the population. The *Sanskrit* language considered *Devabhaasha* (the language of the gods) was guarded jealously from the reach of the masses. *Sanskrit* scholars wallowed in philosophical ineptitudes. The spiritual pursuit of society came to a stand-still. *Harinaamakirtanam* came into this stagnant society as a bolt from the blue.

The *Manipravaalam* (*Sanskrit* and *Malaayalam* strung together in poetry as crystal beads and corals in a garland) style which *Ezhuttachan* used in his major works was a welcome change and it widened readership; but he felt it still inadequate and incapable of reaching all the people with little acquaintance with *Sanskrit*. Hence *Harinaamakirtanam,* profound though it is in philosophical and spiritual content, was written in plain and simple *Malayaalam* in scintillating Dravidian metre, to please the palate of the masses. The *Aachaarya* laments in this song the abysmal depths to which spiritual thinking had degenerated among the people.

Harinaamakirtanam proved a vehicle for moral and spiritual uplift for all the people who had remained till then denied of access to spiritual messages, all non-*Braahmana*s and all vulnerable sections of society particularly women, out-castes and destitutes. An aspect that made *Harinaamakirtanam* the most popular is its simple and inimitable style of composition. Written in pure and simple *Malayaalam*, understandable even to the least educated, it has endeared everyone and there is not hardly any person in Kerala who does not know at least a few lines from this great lyric. *Ezhuttachan* is therefore truly hailed as the architect of *Malayaalam* literature. *Harinaamakirtanam* proved an instant success and it has stood the test of time

Harinaamakirtanam blends the diverse strands of metaphysical thought into a wholesome harmonious system. Of course, it has beneath its placid surface many a spiritual idea that would shine in their intrinsic brilliance only if unravelled and refurbished. To undertake such a formidable task one has first to delve deep into the philosophical systems of Hinduism. All these diverse systems are paths to the one and only Supreme Truth. However, all paths may not suit everyone; each may suit a different set of seekers depending on their psychological, moral and spiritual proclivities. A layman's explanation of the different philosophical systems is attempted in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THE INDIAN SYSTEM OF PHILOSOPHY

The diverse philosophies of India had their origins firmly in the cultural ethos of the society of their times. All of them had *Vedas* as their fountain head and followed the principles of *Dharma* (duties) and *Moksha* (the release of the soul, the ultimate salvation).

India has a cultural and philosophical history of several millennia dating back to an age prior to the advent of *Judaism* and other organized religions. The savants of *Hinduism* founded great schools of metaphysics. Every form of philosophical inquiry and conceptualization that appeared was practised by sections of *Hindu* religion at some point of time in history. Max Muller and Paul Deussen have testified to the fact that India is the fountain head of all philosophical thought and that the *Vedas* and the *Upanishats* contained every philosophical conception that the Western mind has since evolved.

Intensive contemplation on the forces of cosmic energy and its manifestation by the great sages resulted in the emergence of *Shad-Darshana* (the six-fold system of mystic experience). The *Shad-Darshana* system expounded in the *Jnaana Kaanda* of the *Vedas* includes, *Nyaaya, Vaisheshika, Saamkhya, Yoga, Poorva Mimaamsa*, and *Uttara Mimaamsa*, the last one being the culmination and pinnacle of all the traditional treatises of *Vedas*, namely the *Vedaanta*. Each explores reality from a different perspective, but they all complement one another and together yield a unified concept of Supreme Reality.

A. *VEDAANTA*

The leading school of *Hindu* philosophy in India is *Vedaanta* also known as *Uttara Mimaamsa*, which literally means the investigation of the latter part. This is used in contrast to the terms

applied for other philosophical systems known as *Poorva Mimaamsa* or prior investigations. It is believed that the prior part denotes *Veda*s concerned with ritualistic and ceremonial aspects, while the subsequent investigation refers to *Upanishat*s.

Vedaanta literally means the pinnacle of *Veda*, the supreme knowledge founded on the system of philosophy based on the principles of ultimate truth. *Veda* texts, believed to be more than five thousand years old, are four in number: *Rig, Yajur, Saama* and *Adharva*, each *Veda* having two essential parts, *Karma-Kaanda* (dealing with Rituals and Ceremonies) and *Jnaana Kaanda* (discussing Knowledge, Meditation and Self-realisation).

The *Karma-Kaanda* comprises (i) the *Mantra* or the *Samhita* part, which contains hymns invoking *Vedic* deities, (ii) the *Braahmana*s that dwell on the techniques of sacrificial rituals and (iii) the *Aaranyaka*s which discuss contemplative exploration into realms of Reality. The *Jnaana Kaanda* which consists of *Upanishat*s describing the revelations that the seers had experienced in their contemplations, forms the core of the *Veda*s and the essential *Vedaanta*. In fact, all the philosophical systems that blossomed from, and are commentaries on, *Upanishat*s are also known as *Vedaanta*. *Vedaanta* has influenced all religions of Indian origin: *Hinduism*, Budhism, Jainism and Sikhism.

The three basic texts of the *Vedaanta* philosophy are: *Upanishat*s which dwell on the truths revealed to sages in states of super-consciousness; *Brahmasootra*s which contain logical amplification and elucidation of *Upanishat*s; and the *Bhagavad-Gita* which presents a prescient, but practical, message to realize Truth. These three together is known as *Prasthaana Trayam.*

Vedaanta evolved gradually taking concepts from other prevailing systems in response to the pulsating demands of the philosophical minds of India. By systematizing philosophy of unity in diversity and by evaluating and eliminating eclesiatical and ritual ceremonies, there evolved a system attracted by the brightest minds known as

Vedaanta. *Vedaanta* does not oppose ritualistic and ceremonial worship often followed in temples and elsewhere, as such practices are necessary for minds of a certain low degree of development. The *Vedaanta* system is more of a philosophy of pure reasoning than any other religious system of thought based on revelation or faith.

Vedaanta has assimilated a variety of thoughts and doctrines and imparted to each the courage of conviction, confidence and strength. *Vedaanta* leaves to every individual room for development and it can accommodate and contain all religions. The orthodox school failed, however, to go beyond *Brahman*, the all-pervading truth and the Universe which emanated from IT. It failed to explain how plurality originated from oneness of the *Brahman*. *Vedaantists* gave the corrective: they considered reality as only one, the *Brahman*, and multiplicity was observed as illusion. This phenomenal Universe is the result of *Avidya* or ignorance and is described as *Maaya* or illusion.

Brahman, the absolute, is beyond qualities and attributes, beyond subject and object, and the only source of existence, knowledge and bliss absolute. IT is both the material and the efficient cause of the Universe, in its spiritual, material and mental appearances. IT is the creator and the creation, and IT includes both the cause and the effect. IT is truth unique without a second, and IT cannot be divided into parts nor subjected to change. Hence there are no divided selves, but only one Self, the indivisible whole. Outside of this Self there is absolutely nothing; therefore, in reality, there is only non-duality. Although the plurality we experience is unreal and illusory, in ordinary life situations, man may find it real since he dwells in the phenomenal, interactive universe.

The *Vedaanta* philosophy is essentially rooted in three concepts: *Veda* (Spiritual Knowledge), *Brahman* (Supreme Reality) and *Punarjanmam* (Rebirth). *Punarjanmam* is a discourse of evolution of microcosmic souls through cycles of birth, death and rebirth, for sublimation and ultimate union with the

macrocosmic soul. The relationship of the individual soul (*Jivaatma*) with the universal soul (*Paramaatma* or *Brahman*) is envisaged by *Vedaantic* philosophy in three ways: *Advaita* (Absolute Non-Dualism or Monism), *Vishishtaadvaita* (Qualified Non-Dualism or Qualified Monism) and *Dvaita* (Dualism). *Aadi Shankaraachaarya* (C.788-820AD), *Raamaanujaachaarya* (c.1055-1137AD) and *Maadhwaachaarya* (C.1199-1728AD) were the proponents respectively of these three systems.

1. Advaita

Advaita declares unity of all existence in one, the *Brahman*. According to this perception, the universe in all its manifestations and the consciousness of its existence, are illusory. This illusion of reality, the phenomenal world, is the veil of *Maaya* that *Brahman* projects. *Brahman* is the reality that is immanent in, but transcends, all. According to *Advaita* philosophy, the individual selves and the universe are but illusions of the one and only Reality, and therefore non-dual. At a lower level of perception, *Advaita* philosophy speaks of two aspects of *Brahman: Saguna* (with attributes) and *Nirguna* (without attributes). *Saguna* refers to the aspect of *Brahman* which is attributed forms or shapes and qualities. *Nirguna* is the aspect which transcends all description.

The assumption that man suffers from bondage is the central point of *Vedaanta.* The endless cycles of birth and death or *Samsaara,* is the result of the bondage. Therefore the aim of human life is to break the cycle and attain liberation. *Vedaanta* explains what bondage is and what constitutes liberation. *Advaita* considers that knowledge of man's true nature (*Jnaana)* leads to liberation from bondage. Therefore liberation is the regaining of knowledge of one's own true nature that is *Aatman*, which is nothing other than *Brahman*. Thus liberation is return to the true nature of the soul; and realization of its relation with *Brahman* is the true knowledge; but this absolute knowledge can only be realized and not told nor taught.

In *Advaita, Brahman* is considered both the instrumental and the material cause of the universe and it is beyond all change. The material cause always involves change or transformation as curd is formed from milk, where the material cause of curd is milk. During the process milk is converted to curd and milk no more exists. This process is called *Parinaama* or transformation. In *Parinaama,* the cause is lost and only the effect remains evident. However in the case of gold ornaments, the gold remains unchanged, the cause and the effect are one and the same, but its shape or form has undergone change. This sort of change is called *Vivarta*. The *Advaita* philosophy denies the existence of a material cause for the universe and argues that there is no real creation involved. Philosophers who follow the *Drishti-Srishti Vaada* maintain the view that *Brahman* is beyond all causality.

Advaita Vedaanta maintains that *Nirguna Brahman* is devoid of all attributes. In *Upanishads*, IT has been described as *Satyam* (Truth), *Jnaanam* (knowledge), *Anantam* (Infinite) and *Satchidaananda* or existence, knowledge and bliss. *Brahman*'s true nature cannot be explained in words and it lies beyond the realms of the ordinary mind. Hence the attempt to describe it at a lower level of comprehension – the idea of *Saguna Brahman or Brahman* with Attributes.

Human mind cannot visualize *Brahman* through the sensory organs. In order to understand *Brahman* one has to go beyond the premise that *Brahman* is the material and the instrumental cause of the universe and understand *Brahman* in Itself, not in relation to the Universe. It will be then possible to understand that the universe is only superimposition on the underlying Reality, *Brahman*. Thus *Advaita Vedaanta* explains that God, Universe and individual self are all but one and the same unchangeable Reality, the *Brahman*.

2. Vishishtaadvaita

Vishishtaadvaita (Qualified Non-Dualism) holds that *Brahman*

has only one aspect and that IT manifests as individual selves constituting the phenomenal universe (*Prakriti*). Though *Brahman* and *Prakriti* are essentially one and the same, they maintain their distinct identities. Individual selves when liberated from the shackles of illusions and imperfections (*Maaya*) attain the glories of *Brahman*.

Although *Visishtaadvaita* is attributed to Sri *Raamaanuja*, in reality the philosophy had been expounded, just after *Shankara*'s time, by *Naathamuni*. However, *Raamaanuja* was credited with the advancement of the philosophy through a number of authoritative compositions. In line with other schools of *Vedaanta*, *Visishtaadvaita* also claims *Prasthaana traya* the triple canon representing *Brahmasootras, Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishat*s, to be the foundation of that philosophy. The followers of *Visishtaadvaita* refer to their school as *Ubhaya Vedaanta* or dual *Vedaanta*. *Prasthaana trayam* and *Vaishnavism* together constitute the corner-stones of *Visishtaadvaita* philosophy.

The *Visishtaadvaita* philosopher considers *Brahman* as unique and indescribable, but refutes the *Advaita* concept of *Nirguna* (devoid of attributes). He also believes that only divine revelation can describe *Brahman*. The *Aatman* and consciousness are one and the same and cannot be defined without a remainder. Consciousness is the way of *Ataman*'s self-expression, from its substratum. This perception involves plurality of individual selves. By nature, the various souls are the same but are different and independent entities with regard to one another, according to *Vishishtaadvaita*. *Brahman* is nothing other than the indwelling reality which animates individual souls and controls all inanimate phenomena. The inanimate universe as well as the *jiva*s undergo change in their existence during both unmanifested and manifested states, this change being the will of *Brahman*, the changeless. *Jiva*s are finite even after they attain salvation but their knowledge becomes infinite; *Brahman* is infinite in all respects. Inanimate phenomena are imperfect and impure, while *jiva*s by nature, are

free of impurity; their connection with the imperfect universe taints them and makes them appear imperfect and impure.

3. Dvaita

Dvaita (Dualism) assumes two distinct aspects of ultimate reality: *Brahman* (Absolute Reality) with attributes (*Ishwara*) and the phenomenal universe comprising individual selves (Relative Reality). Relative Reality is ever dependent on, but distinct from, *Ishwara*, unlike in *Vishishtaadvaita,* which considers both essentially aspects of the same *Brahman.* According to *Dvaita,* individual selves can imbibe the characteristics of *Ishwara* and attain perfection through devotion.

Dvaita, also known as *Bheda vaada* (the thesis of differences), asserts the difference between the individual soul (*jiva*) and the creator (*Ishwara).* The major proponent of this philosophy is *Maadhvaachaarya* also known as *Aanandatirtha.* The philosophy, known also as *Maadhva sidhaanta* or *Dvaita sidhaanta*, attributes eternal differences between the individual soul (*jiva*) and the Lord Supreme (*Ishwara)* also known as *Vishnu. Dvaita* is also known as *tatva vaada* because it asserts fine differences between *Ishwara* and individual *jiva*s. These include differences between the soul and *Vishnu (Jiva - Ishwara Bheda*), matter and *Vishnu* (*Jada - Ishwara Bheda*), soul and soul, (*Mita - Jiva Bheda),* between matter and soul *(Jada- Jiva Bheda*) and matter and matter (*Mita- Jada Bheda*). Insentient matter is not *chitta* (consciousness). However *Ishwara* is sentient, so also is *Jiva.* This does not imply that *jiva* and *Ishwara* are alike; the former is completely dependent on *Ishvara* which is independent; in other words, *Jiva* is energized by *Ishwara.*

The *Tatva vaada* proposed by *Maadhvaachaarya* has 9 tenets accepted by the *Dvaita* school: (1) *Hari (Vishnu*) is supreme; (2) the universe is real; (3) the five differences stated above are real; (4) leagues of *jiva*s are cohorts of *Hari;* (5) *jiva*s have superior and inferior qualities among themselves; (6) salvation is

the experience of the innate joy; (7) bliss is achieved by flawless devotion to the Supreme; (8) the *pramaanas* are perception, logic and scriptures; and (9) *Hari* is the only supreme reality.

In *Advaita* philosophy, God *(Ishwara)* is the *Saguna* manifestation of *Brahman*, the Absolute principle, rendered possible by the power of *Maaya*. It is *Ishwara* who, by the power of *Yoga-Maaya*, projects the phenomenal universe. *Advaita* is considered *Vedaanta* for its conception of absolute non-dualism, transcending the perceptions of *Vishishtaadvaita* and *Dvaita*. Despite such shades of difference, these three *Vedaantic* systems consider *Brahman* the Absolute Reality and the individual selves and the phenomenal universe that comprises them (in a state of bondage of pleasure and pain because of their (imagined) identification with bodily existence) experiences in the path of perpetual progress towards perfection.

B. SAAMKHYA

The *Shad-Darshanas* specialise in enquiries into certain aspects of *Vedaantic* knowledge. One of them, the *Saamkhya* of sage *Kapila*, dwells on the interaction between *Purusha* (the principle of consciousness in all beings) and *Prakriti* (the Primordial Matrix) which results in the phenomenal world. According to *Saamkhya, Purushas* are legion while *Prakriti* is only one. *Prakriti* conceives and shapes the universe conferring on it mind, body and matter, animated by consciousness. *Purushas* have the possibility of liberating themselves from their conditioning involvement with *Prakriti* and regaining their pure state of consciousness.

Human existence is characterized by sufferings which can only be removed by developing discriminatory knowledge and revelation of truth through scriptural pracrtice. *Saamkhya* accepts three means to attain Truth: perception, inference and authority. *Saamkhya* like *Vedaanta* advocates *Satkaarya Vaada* in which the effect is considered pre-existent in the cause. What appears as real is only a change in appearance; that means the effect was already present

in the cause. *Saamkhya* recognizes 24 principles , all associated with the manifested *Prakriti* (Nature) and its nature , the three *gunas*. The 25th principle is entirely and perpetually distinct and is the changeless eternal witness, *Purusha*. Self-conscious, intellectual activity and emotion have emerged from *Prakriti*. *Purusha* does not Feel, Think or Will but appears both as individual *Purusha* and as Cosmic *Purusha*. All the pain and suffering of the individual appears from *Prakriti* and not from individual *Purusha* or Cosmic *Purusha*.

Being an inquiry essentially into the origins and evolution of the Universe, *Saamkhya* does not delve deep into the basic oneness of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. Nor does it deal with the question of Absolute or Ultimate Reality. It confines the scope of enquiry to a selected problem in the manner the scientific world of today does; it defines the problem, develops the design, explains the method, analyses information, draws conclusions and indicates possible avenues for further pursuit. Indian philosophical tradition has accepted *Saamkhya* as a preliminary step to the analysis and understanding of *Advaita*. *Advaita* takes the infinite number of *Purushas* of the *Saamkhya* exposition as reflections of the same *Purusha*, in different aspects of *Prakriti*, like reflections of the same sun in different pools.

C. *YOGA* OF *PATANJALI*

Patanjali who lived during 700-600 BC, was a great visionary with abundant practical experience. His ethics is based on brotherhood manifested through spiritual will founded on oneness of all lives and his philosophy is based on positive and negative opposites, such as friendliness and love as against hatred and suspicion. These types of opposites are found throughout all manifestations; positives strengthen the advancement towards Truth, while negatives lead to perdition.

Sage *Patanjali*, the proponent of *Yoga* takes *Saamkhya* as the basis of the *Yoga* system. *Purushas*, according to him, are passive

in nature; their involvement activates and enlivens *Prakriti*, bestowing on it *Chitta* (mind), in the wise of an iron bar becoming magnetic on contact with a charged magnet. He avers that *Ishwara* - the universal soul - is infinite, formless, actionless, unruffled, omniscient and all-pervasive. While the Universal *Purusha* (*Ishwara*) transcends time and space, individual *Purushsas* exist in time, space and activity. *Patanjali* has prescribed a method which he called *Yoga* (yoking up), for deliverence of the individual *Purusha* from the bonds of *Prakriti*. *Raaja* (royal) *Yoga* constitutes the best method.

Literally *Yoga* means binding, balancing and enhancing one's psychic powers. By harnessing one's psychic energies and yoking them to intense concentration, one's ego is transcended and one's true nature revealed. Perfection is attained at the human level only through conscious endeavour. The godliness innate in one is in bounds which it strives to undo. Those of us who live in indulgence may not realize the bondage nor feel the urge to seek Truth. Indulgence leads to fleeting feelings of pleasure and pain, but to no permanent peace. *Yoga* is the path to peaceful and harmonious living.

The *yoga* system is divided into two: *Hatha yoga* which deals principally with the physiological part of man, intended to maintain good health and to discipline the mind. The practice of this system is extremely difficult and only very few reach perfection and attain the goal. Thus the system was denounced by many philosophers. *Shankara* also has spoken against the practice of *Hatha yoga*. The second system, *Raaja yoga,* intended to discipline the mind, has attracted attention of *yoga* practitioners on a much wider scale. Through these rules of *Patanjali*, the student becomes capable of discrimination of what is unreal and what is real. Although the results may not be immediate, *Raaja yoga* helps in developing the right psychic environment for spiritual awareness and advancement through concentration of mind.

Patanjali 's system considers that *Purusha*, the spirit in man, is

not influenced or affected by desires, works, fruits of work or afflictions or sufferings. The system postulates that in its progress to union with the eternal *Ishwara* through meditation, the Almighty comes to the aid of the individual self. In the process, the practitioner comes to shed his frailties – passions and desires – and becomes strong and unruffled in devotion and determination. This *Patanjali* aphorism is accepted as an outgrowth of *Saamkhya,* which promises remarkable improvement in its total effect.

A large number of the followers of the *Yoga* aphorism of *Patanjali* prefer the road of *Raaja Yoga. Patanjali* accepted THAT, the *Brahman,* as *Kapila* had accepted the *Saamkhya* doctrine of *Tatwa*s. Like *Kapila*, he postulated the great Universal principles of *Prakriti* from which evolved everything other than the Spirit, including the mind. *Patanjali* also considered the existence of innumerable spiritual entities, souls, or *Purusha*s, who energize the *Prakriti* and produce the world, the phenomenal universe, with its manifestations of life forms and activities.

Patanjali goes further and asserts the existence of a Macrocosmic *Purusha*, the universal soul, a personal God (*Ishwara)*, which is formless, infinite, omniscient, omnipotent and free from all desire, pain and activity. Even though *Patanjali* considers the universal *Purusha* as personal God he makes a shade of distinction from the orthodox idea of *Ishwara*. He considers that the Universal *Purusha* differs from individual *Purusha*s not in kind but only in degree. The Universal *Purusha* remains apart, outside and above time, while the individual *Purusha* is involved in *Samsaara* (existence). The universal *Purusha* (*Ishwara)* ever remains apart, neither involved nor responsible for it. The individual *Purusha* should strive and aim for union with *Iswvara* through the practice of *Raaja yoga. Patanjali*'s union with God does not mean the return to THAT of the *Vedaanta* philosophers, but rather an absorbtion into or union with the universal or Personal God. *Purusha*s entangled in *Prakriti* enter into a long journey of *Samsaara*, take recurrent lives, as has been taught by other *Hindu* doctrines. The final blending or union with God envisaged in this

conceptualization is not a state envisaged by the *Advaita* philosophers.

The most striking principle of the *Patanjali* system is the deliverence of the individual *Purusha* from the bonds of *Prakriti* or material existence by realization of Truth through exercise of proper methods. Deliverence is possible through several means, the principal and the best of which is *Raaja Yoga*. *Patanjali* and *Kapila* conceived the mind stuff (*chitta*) as material and held it as one which evolved from *Purusha*. In order to attain the state of absorbtion or blending, *Patanjali* devised and proposed 8 steps:. *Yama* (self-control), *Niyama* (observances), *Aasanas* (postures), *Praanaayaama* (control of breath), *Pratyaahaara* (control of senses), *Dhaarana* (control of mind), *Dhyaana* (meditation), and *Samaadhi* (transcendence).

D. *VAISHESHIKA*

The *Vaisheshika* system of philosophy is believed to have been founded by Sage *Kanaada* several centuries before Christ. There exists a voluminous literature related to this philosophical point of view. *Vaisheshika*, the philosophy of discrimination, is based on microcosms and macrocosms. *Kanaada* examined the universe and its life forms from an objective point of view and maintained that the phenomenal universe is constituted of six independent categories known as *Padaarthas* (material qualities) which are absolute and not hypothetical nor relative. His teaching propounded an atomic theory of the universe. According to it atoms are eternal, indivisible, invisible and changeless entities. The *Vaisheshika* philosophy advances theories explaining how invisible atoms unite to make visible matter. To explain the phenomenal plurality of the universe, it had originally introduced six categories of the atomic state which include *Dravya*, (the essential aggregate), *Guna*, (quality), *Karma*, (action), *Samanvaya,* (synthesis), *Vishesha,* (discreteness) and *Samavaaya* (coherence). To these six *padaarthas*, *Abhaava*, (non-manifestation) was added as a category, in later teachings.

Vaisheshika recognises countless self-existing atomic individual souls or selves (*Aatmans*). These souls are eternal but they experience both pleasure and pain. *Ishwara* is conceived as Perfect Soul, which is omniscient and omnipotent. It is *Ishwara* who connects the categories that constitute the universe. He also connects the actions of beings and the results of the actions. The souls incarnate in substances, work their way towards freedom just as the individual *Purushas* of *Kapila's Saamkhya* system do. *Vaisheshika* regards the individual *Purushas* or souls as possessing *Gunas* (qualities) in contrast to the *Saamkhya* view that *Purushas* in their original state are beyond qualities. To release itself from the worldly bondage and limitations of the body and for ultimate emancipation, *Purusha* has to acquire true knowledge of the categories that constitute the universe and cultivate non-attachment to them.

Vaisheshika and *Nyaaya* agree in their essential principles such as the nature and qualities of the Self and the atomic theory of the Universe. *Vaisheshika* arranges the enquiries under categories or *padaarthas*, which enumerate certain predictable general properties or attributes to existing entities or matter. *Kanaada* considered mind as an eternal substance which can admit one thought at a time but does not pervade everywhere like the Soul. Each category is further divided into sub-categories or *padaartha,* meant for attaining God realization. *Vaisheshikas* believe God as the efficient cause and atoms the material cause of the universe. Atoms have no power or intelligence to run this universe in an orderly manner and are regulated by the omniscient and omnipotent God. Souls are devoid of intelligence; they cannot control atoms. As there is no source of motion in the atoms, there should be a first mover, and that mover is God, the creator.

Vaisheshika is founded on the aphorism that the universe is effected by the aggregation of atoms. These atoms are eternally aggregated, reaggregated and disintegrated by the power of *Adrishta* (unseen). Atoms are indivisible, invisible and imperceptible to the senses. They are defined as existing and eternal, but having

no cause of their own; they are further divided into *paramaanus* (or sub-atomic particles such as electrons) of earth, water fire and air. Individual atoms are in a process of combining and disintegrating. *Vaisheshika* envisages existence of eternal atoms along side eternal souls. Individual souls are manifold, eternally separate from one another and distinct from the body, senses and mind, yet capable of apprehension, desire, aversion, hatred, pleasure and pain. The body is subtle in *Pralaya* or dissolution and gross during creation. The time, place, circumstances of birth and span of life all are determined by the *Adrishta*. The souls are absolutely free from all connections, with qualities in the state of *Moksha* (Release) when independence is regained. Knowledge of the Self destroys falsehood, attraction and misapprehension (*Mōha*). This leads to the ultimate release or liberation from birth and associated sufferings.

E. *NYAAYA*

Nyaaya, the analytical system founded by *Gautama*, comes very close to the perception of the *Vaisheshika* philosophy in its logical process of examination and analysis. According to *Gautama*, the logical method of ascertaining Truth is the understanding and application of the sixteen categories of *Padaarthas* and rejecting fallacies and errors. Thus the *Nyaaya* system takes into account 16 categories as against the 6 or 7 categories of the *Vaisheshika* system. Another major difference between these two systems is that while *Nyaaya* depends on perception (*pratyaksha*), inference (*anumaana*), comparison (*upamaana*) and verbal testimony (*shabda*) for acquiring knowledge, the *Vaisheshika* system relies only on perception and inference. In many respects the *Nyaaya* system is complementary to the *Vaisheshika* system. It holds that the material universe is atomic and that the souls are countless which get entangled in matter. The way to liberation is through the knowledge of *Nyaaya* philosophy and its methods. Originally, the *Nyaaya* system did not mention anything about *Ishwara*, the Personal God or the Universal Reality. However, later *Nyaaya* philosophy admitted *Ishwara*, as the one who regulated and

maintained the universe. *Ishwara* directs the combination of atoms and takes active part in directing the universe but is not considered the cause of souls or atoms.

Nyaaya philosophy is also known as *Tarka Vidya* (Science of Logic). The term *Nyaaya* signifies investigating analytically or discussing logically. The philosophical import of *Nyaaya* consists of examination of the object of knowledge. The purpose of *Nyaaya* is a critical examination of the objects of knowledge by means of logical proof. Thus *Nyaaya* system deals critically with metaphysical problems. It contains discussions on psychology, metaphysics, logic and theology. It was the *Nyaaya* philosophers who first developed the *pramaana*s, the codified rules and procedures, the means by which one can gain true and accurate knowledge. The evidence of the senses is submitted to a critical enquiry. These major contributions of *Nyaaya* are accepted by all schools of philosophy.

Nyaaya and *Vaisheshika* are regarded as parts of one single whole, and they explore the significance of time, space, matter, cause, mind, soul and knowledge of experience. They both believe in a personal God and a multiplicity of souls and in an atomic Universe. They both think that the world is made up of many different things and that these things exist as perceived. They believe that all things are composed of nine fundamental substances - the five elements and space, time, mind and selves and whatever exist in both knowable and namable form.

Nyaaya holds the view that the actions of human beings produce their fruits called *Adrishta*. God controls *Adrishta* and renders its operation possible but not directs nor alters the course of *Adrishta*. According to *Nyaaya,* God is a person, bestowed with fruits of actions of human beings and is endowed with omnipotence and omniscience. God, the all-pervading creator, is the embodiment of eternal knowledge *(Nitya Jnaana)*. *Nyaaya* also avers that soul is real and is also an eternal entity but possessed *guna*s such as desire, aversion, volition, pleasure, pain, intelligence and cognition.

None of these *gunas* could express itself without the **I** (soul). Nor would sense organs perceive anything without **I** (soul). The mind is not the soul but is an instrument of **I**. The universe according to *Nyaaya* is a composite of eternal, unalterable, causeless atoms which exist independently of mind. Misapprehension or false knowledge can be removed by practising the 16 categories promulgated by *Nyaaya*. On attaining true Knowledge, *raaga* (affection), *dvesha* (aversion), and *moha* (misapprehension) vanish. When false knowledge vanishes and faults disappear, the soul becomes freed of all bondage and all activity and relieved of all pains forever. Freedom of the soul signifies liberation from pain and passion.

F. *POORVA-MIMAAMSA*

Among the *Shad-Darshanas*, apart from *Saamkhya*, *Poorva-Mimaamsa* (Prior Enquiry) and *Uttara-Mimaamsa* (Later Enquiry) deserve special mention. *Mimaamsa* in Sanskrit means investigation or enquiry into the proper interpretation of *Vedic* texts. *Poorva-mimaamsa,* also known as *Dharma Mimaamsa* or *Karma Mimaamsa*, is an enquiry into the earlier portions of the *Vedas*, particularly an insight into the rituals and *mantras* followed in ritualistic observances. The *Mimaamsa* school of philosophy is better known as the *Poorva Mimaamsa* school, meaning the school of investigation into the early part, because it is concerned with the earlier sections of the *Vedas*. *Vedaanta* is alternatively called *Uttara Mimaamsa* as it comprises study of the latter part of the *Vedas*, particularly the *Upanishats*.

While *Poorva-Mimaamsa* contains elaborate enquiries into *Karma-Kaanda* (rituals and ceremonies) to propitiate deities for their granting of worldly enjoyments first to be followed by bliss thereafter, *Uttara-Mimaamsa* makes explorations into *Jnaana-Kaanda* for spiritual emancipation through meditation and devotion. The ritualism of the *Poorva-Mimaamsa*, with its primary emphasis on worldly pleasures to the relative neglect of the ultimate goal of life, got entrenched in the society at

some stage of history with the active support of priesthood which promised people the joys of heaven despite lives of indulgence in this world.

Mimaamsa sootra of *Jaimini* deals with the ritual aphorisms contained in the *Veda*s. He gives a detailed description of the various sacrifices, their purposes and effects. The results of the sacrifices often come after death of the person performing the rituals. *Veda*s are eternal and uncreated thus precluding any claim to divine origin. They are the expression in *Sabda* (voice) of the eternal. *Jaimini* accepts the three *pramaana*s of *Veda*s: *pratyaksha* (perception), *anumaana* (inference) and *sabda* (verbal testimony). In order to establish the truth of *Vedic* injunctions, *Mimaamsa* tries to prove that words, their meanings and their interrelationships, are eternal. Because of its philosophy, language and lingustics, it is also called *Vaakya Shaastra* (theory of speech).

Jaimini who lived during the second century BC was an opponent of rationalism and theism. *Veda* was practically the only God for him. *Mimaamsa* teaches that the whole aim and objective of the system is to have a strong understanding of *Dharma* (Duty), which bestows rewards for performing rites and sacrifices. Practice of *Veda Dharma* leads to happiness. Although *Jaimini* does not explicitly deny God, he ignores the concept; the later *Mimaamsa* philosophers maintain that all work ought to be performed as offering to God. Such offering becomes the cause or the means of emancipation.

The fruits or rewards of sacrifice conducted with *Shraddha* (Diligence) and devotion are not the dispensations of any benevolent God; they emanate from the sacrifice itself and do not have any connection other than with itself. *Apoorva* or *Adrishta* is a positive force created by the act that leads to the attainment of the fruit of action. Of course, this explanation could not satisfy all; hence the later propounders of *Mimaamsa* introduced the God concept into the system, as a supreme and indispensable element in the teachings of *Mimaamsa*.

According to *Minaamsa* the self is distinct from the body, senses and intellect. It distinguishes self from senses since it remains after they are injured. The body is made up of matter while self is not. Self is all-pervading and unperishable and it activates the body. Self survives the disintegration of the body, and depending on the merit of sacrifices, goes to heaven or re-enters the cycle of life and death.

The *Mimaamsa* school is divided into sub-schools of *Bhatta*s and *Prabhaakara*s. The *Prabhaakara*s expound the absolute cessation of the body caused by the total disappearance of *Adharma* and *Dharma* whose operation is the cause of either rebirth or ultimate release (liberation). Exhaustion of *Karma*s only can bring about final release. The views of *Kumaarila Bhatta* come very close to the *Advaita Vedaanta*. *Kumaarila* maintains that the *Veda*s are composed by God Himself and constitute *Brahmam* in the form of *Sabda Brahma*. *Moksha*, according to him, is a positive state in the realization of *Aatman*. He thinks that final emancipation can be attained only through *Karma* (Action) in accompaniment of *Jnaana* (knowledge) and not through knowledge alone.

OTHER THOUGHTS AND PHILOSOPHIES

A. *Buddhism*

It was during a period of debasement of the *Hindu* philosophical system that *Buddhism* emerged as a corrective force. *Buddhism* comes closer to the *Upanishats* rather than to *Shad-Darshana*s. It dates back to 600 BC, and was founded by *Gautama*, the *Buddha*. The term *Buddha* means the Illumined or the Enlightened. Although this philosophy and religion spread all over India and to all the neighboring countries during a particular period in history, currently it survives only in countries outside India; it has practically disappeared altogether from India, the country of its origin. However, even today its philosophy exerts great influence on India's cultural life. Currently the West is showing

increasing interest in *Buddhism*. The *Buddha*'s teachings and the philosophy based on them are often misinterpreted as closely following materialism as the philosophy apparently does not admit the existence of God or *Brahman*, denies the reality of the phenomenal world and disapproves of the existence of individual souls.

In reality, *Gautama* did not deny the existence of *Brahman*, but he simply refused to speculate regarding It's nature, character and being. He held the view that man happens to exist in the phenomenal world and that it is important for him to get away from suffering by breaking the cycle of birth and rebirth. He is said to have maintained that the phenomenal universe emerged from Nothingness into which it returns. Of course, this statement, in this form, is contradictory to the *Hindu* philosophy that asserts that "something can never emerge from nothing nor can something be resolved into nothing." The *Buddha* is also said to have maintained that the freedom of the soul or *Nirvaana* is a state of Supreme Enlightenment. It is quite possible that some of the followers of the *Buddha*, not equipped to experience *Nirvaana*, presented their own theories interpreting the spiritual experience of *Nirvaana* as Nothingness. On their part, the Western writers have contributed much to this confusion. In fact, the doctrine actually teaches *Nirvaana* as the annihilation of *Maaya*, a blowing out of *Avidya* or ignorance and a returning to a state of Universal Inner Consciousness rather than an extinction of consciousness.

The *Buddhist* doctrine teaches, of course, non-being, the termination of the phenomenal life surpassing *Maaya*, the generator of the illusion of Duality. The *Buddha* denounces *Maaya* as utter ignorance, devoid of even a shade of Truth or Reality and teaches that the very essence of the 'lust for life' was *Karma* or desire. From desire arises *Samsaara* or the cycle of existence, which constitutes guilt, sorrow, grief, pain, death, rebirth and re-embodiment under the law of *Karma*. There are considerable similarities between the *Buddhist* idea of the lust for life and the *Saamkhya* principle of *Prakriti* and the *Vedaantic* idea of *Maaya*.

From the lust for life springs the phenomenal life with its *Samsaara* or cycle of existence from which the soul struggles to detach and escape. However, *Buddhism* does not agree with the concept of individual souls or *Purushas* of the *Saamkhya* philosophy, although it accepts the concept of *Prakriti*.

The *Buddha* refused to accept the existence of individual souls, claiming that the sense of separateness was due solely to *Avidya* (Ignorance) or *Maaya* (Illusion). According to him there could be no such thing as an individual soul; in reality all was THAT and nothing else. Till this stage, his doctrine closely resembles *Advaita* (non-dual) *Vedaanta;* however, the *Buddha* went further and refused to admit even the concept of a Universal Soul. The *Buddha* held the view that the spirit in man is only the animating reflection or manifestation of the undivided spirit of THAT. Thus he held that there was no separate soul other than the character of the individual consisting of the attributes and qualities acquired by man. This quality of 'characters' was the only soul man could have. And it was this 'character' which reincarnated in a new body under the law of *Karma*. This character was the sum total of man's thoughts and actions which hold together firmly and constitute the individuality, the I which was not a real and eternal entity. However, when these individual qualities are taken apart, there was nothing in itself and there is no soul left. The followers of the six systems of philosophy have been considered insiders by the orthodox *Hindus*, but they did not accept *Buddhists* as insiders. This might perhaps have been due to the strong stand taken by the *Buddha* against animal scarifies and the rituals and tortures connected with them that were rampant in the degenerated *Hindu* orthodoxy of his times. *Buddhism* came as a reformative movement to the *Hindu* society and has had great influence on the *Hindu* way of life. In the great *Hindu* scripture *Bhaagavatam*, the *Buddha* is eulogised as one of the incarnations of Lord *Vishnu*.

Irrespective of caste, creed, place or time, *Gautama* assured the right of salvation to all and commanded his disciples to preach his doctrine in all places and to all people. He was the first seer to

accept the widest circle of mankind as one, imparting to all a feeling of love, sympathy and brotherhood.

The fundamental cause of suffering and unhappiness is due to the sense of separateness to which I is subjected. This sense of separateness results in selfishness, greed, strife, conflict and all other evil manifestations that, in turn, cause the nightmare of suffering. Thus the root cause of suffering is evil; by following the teaching of the *Buddha* the illusion and separateness can be eliminated by destroying desire. Each desire brings forth a new crop of desires and the human being gets enmeshed fast in *Karma*-related Causes and Effects. Escape from this entanglement calls for an understanding of the cause of evil and the effort to eradicate the cause. Thus by killing desires, the power of evil can be annihilated and the lust for life eradicated. The individual soul created by the lust for life now realizes that it is not an individual personality or entity different from THAT. Thus the soul ceases to be. When individuality dissolves there remains only THAT, the Universal Spirit. The liberated soul retires into the very heart of THAT or attains *Para-Nirvaana* or Bliss Absolute.

The four truths of salvation taught by the *Buddha* are the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of cessation of suffering and the truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. Thus by killing desire, suffering can be put an end to and eternal freedom attained. The eight principles that constitute the ways of escape are expounded in a number of other scriptures too.

Buddhism shunned all ceremonies and rituals and preached non-attachment and non-indulgence. It was rooted in the ideas and vision of the *Upanishats*. The cultural renaissance that *Buddhism* brought about revived the interest of societies in the teachings of *Upanishats* and the pursuit of the goal of spiritual emancipation. Unfortunately, however, the influence of *Buddhism* waned after a few centuries despite its lofty philosophy of Universal Love, Brotherhood and Non-violence, may be due to the non-existence of God (*Ishwara*) in its scheme of things.

B. *Vedaanta and the renaissance*

The decline of *Buddhist* influence on society led the way to a re-emergence and re-assertation of *Vedic* thought and philosophy, particularly the *Jnaana–Kaanda. Aadi Shankaraacharya,* the greatest of all the seers and philosophers of the past two-thousand years, heralded this renaissance. Born in Kerala, this great spiritual leader took his message to all parts of India from Kerala to Kashmir through extensive travel, establishment of temples of learning and magnificent written commentaries in the *Sanskrit* language on *Upanishats*, *Brahmasootras* and the *Bhagavad Gita. Aadi Shankara* re-emphasised the *Advaitic* wisdom that the Universe is a conditioned expression (*Vivarta*) of *Brahman* brought about by the veiling power of *Maaya*. Individual selves are in essence the infinite Supreme *Brahman* itself. Yet, owing to conditioned experience, humans are aware only of the Relative Reality of their experience. The Ultimate is one and the same and is indivisible. Nothing is there apart from and outside of it.

Aadi Shankara says: "B*rahman* is Truth and Universe, Illusion". Universe exists only in the sense of Relative Reality, and that too only till Absolute Reality is realized.

Ishwara, the *Saguna* manifestation of *Brahman*, creates, preserves and destroys in an eternal continuum. He manifests in himself the *Para* (the higher, the other) and the *Apara* (the lower, the same) attributes, grossly interpreted as the Divine and the Mundane. Creation is identified with *Brahma*, preservation with *Vishnu* and destruction with *Shiva,* the three attributes of *Ishwara* - the *Saguna* aspect of *Brahman*, the Absolute Reality.

Brahman is known by various names: *Paramaatma*, the dweller in and the lord of all souls; and *Purushottama,* the Supreme *Purusha* (the cosmic consciousness). In the *saguna* manifestation of *Ishwara*, he is the light to the ignorant and the blind and the support and strength to the sinner and the hapless; he is forgiveness, mercy, peace and the path to self-realisation.

Modern science is moving towards the perceptions of *Vedaanta*. *Vedaanta* does not negate or deny rituals and ceremonies and worship. They could make ripples at the subtle regions of the universal consciousness and the individual mind and activate dormant energies. Rituals become an obstacle to spiritual progress only when the means are mistaken for the goals.

C. *Vedaanta Today*

In recent times we have seen a number of renowned practitioners of *Vedaanta*: *Bhagavaan Shri Raamakrishna, Swaami Vivekaananda, Swaami Dayaananda Saraswaty, Swaami Raamateertha, Sri Aravinda, Swaami Sivaananda, Ramana Maharshi, Chattampi Swaami, Shri Naaraayana Guru, Lokamaanya Baala Gangaadhara Tilak,* and *Mahaatma Gaandhi.* They have made remarkable contributions for salvaging humanity from the philosophical, socio-cultural and political morass of the modern times. Among them *Shri Raamakrishna*, the self-illumined saint of *Dakshineshwa,* delved deep into the ocean of both the oriental and the occidental ideas of spirituality and tested on himself the principles of all the major religions in the world in the context of *Vedaanta*. Through his own example he proved that 'Truth is only one but the paths leading to Truth are several'.

Shri Raamakrishna's disciple *Swaami Vivekaananda* in his lectures in America and England delivered during the end of the nineteenth century, expounded the vision *Raamakrishna* gained from his experiments. *Vivekaananda* asserted in his speech thus: "Do not care for the doctrines, do not care for dogmas, sects or churches or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality; and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that, and criticize no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words or names or sects, that it means spiritual realization". The message of the great master to the mankind is "be spiritual and realize for yourself". One may

visualize the same realization and compassion from *Ramana Maharshi*. *Mahaatma Gaandhi* emphasized the need for adherence to the three fundamental principles of spirituality: Truth, Non-violence and Celibacy. He experimented with all the three and realized Truth, the highest goal of the human life. The *Mahaatma* found that service in the uplift of the needy and the desolate and the political activism for the benefit of the masses without sacrificing the great values of life, is the ideal path for realizing Truth. He wrote: "To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face to face, one must be able to love the meanest of creations as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means".

We will find a remarkable blending of all these views and interpretations of Indian philosophy, both ancient and modern, in *Aachaarya Ezhuttachan's* superb philosophical masterpiece *Harinaamakirtanam* which takes us to the broadest and the highest realms of spiritual experience.

PATHS OF REALIZATION OF TRUTH

The *Yoga* principle speaks of three major paths (*Maargas*) to self-realisation: *Jnaana* (knowledge), *Bhakti* (devotion) and *Karma* (action). The *Jnaana* method denotes the pursuit of true knowledge that transcends mundane knowledge of all forms, types and descriptions. *Bhakti* denotes absolute surrender to the Supreme. And *Karma* implies the selfless discharge of one's duties. These three routes may be characterized in a rough and ready fashion, as theoretical, emotional and practical. At the end, the three – learning, devotion and duty – culminate in one and the same Truth, the state of Bliss for the *Yoga* practioner (*Yogi*). He appears to the world as a beacon of Eternal Light, Absolute Knowledge, Righteousness, Steadfastness and Non-Attachment.

He himself is transcended into Bliss, Beauty and Holiness, all in one.

A. *JNAANA MAARGA* (The Path of Knowledge)

The spiritual and the intellectual paths are not the same. The path of *Jnaana* (or better, *Vijnaana*), the experimental knowledge of God or *Brahman* as the pathway to scientific knowledge, is different from that of *Jnaana* or spiritual enlightenment. Spiritual knowledge is not theoretical learning or correct beliefs of physical and intellectual entities and ignorance is not absence of or blindness to mundane knowledge. To remove ignorance and establish spiritual wisdom one should cast away one's shroud of the ephemeral, and refurbish one's soul of all its defilement. True Wisdom is spontaneous experience that dawns as soon as obstacles and impediments to its realization are removed. According to *Advaita Vedaanta*, it is always immanent and does not have to be acquired; it has only to be revealed. Pure wisdom is transcendent and completely different from worldly scientific knowledge. Truths disclosed by physical and psychological sciences are, of course, true, but are only partial and ephemeral. It is totally erroneous to imagine that self-realisation, or the dawn of Absolute Truth, would be possible through pursuits of the intellect. The craving for the Ultimate Truth, known as *jijnaasa* (enthusiasm), is a major factor in the progress as well as in the attainment of the goal.

B. BHAKTI MAARGA (The Path of Devotion)

Bhakti (Devotion) is a relationship of trust and love of God. Worship of *Nirguna Brahma* (un-manifested God) is difficult for ordinary people, although *Advaita* (Non-Dualism) declares God as impersonal Reality. Worship of the Ultimate Reality as one possessing form (manifested God) is within the realm of possibility for ordinary humans. Although *Veda*s and *Upanishat*s contain praises and prayers for the Lord in diverse forms, the origins of this path of *Bhakti* (Devotion) are not known. *Bhakti* literally means service, service of the Lord, in intense love and attachment.

The human soul is drawn to the Divine by constant contemplation of God's power, wisdom and goodness and total surrender to His will. Devotion is the path of *Dvaita* (Dualism) philosophy, which entails both the worshipper and the worshipped as separate entities. *Bhakti* (Devotion) bases itself on sacrifice, service, compassion, love, mercy, righteousness and nobleness - all feminine qualities. No wonder, *Bhakta*s imagine themselves to be brides of God, the Supreme Groom (*Purusha*). *Bhakti* is the soul's detachment from the world and attachment to God. Through *Bhakti*, the devotee attains God at which stage the idea of Duality melts away and the devotee and the Divine merge into oneness, into *Advaita*.

Bhakti (Devotion) is of two types. *Bhakti* requiring faith and love, and *Prapati*, the wholehearted surrender to God. In the latter the *Bhakta* (Devotee) places himself in His hands leaving everything to Him. When we are emptied of our ego, God takes possession. The impediments to God-possession are caused by ego – notions of virtue, pride, knowledge, predilections and prejudices. *Prapati* implies steadfast faith in the Lord, resort to him as saviour, and complete self-surrender. *Prapati* transforms mind into ecstasy, an ecstasy of Divine presence. In ecstasy, the devotee loses himself and becomes one with God. The duality of devotee and diety completely disappears. This is the state which *Prahlaada* had attained, the condition of oneness with God.

Bhakti, the sense of intense love and longing for God also takes one to Bliss and liberates the individual soul of all its bondage. According to *Vaishnavism*, the ardent Cult of Devotion, God cannot be realized through logic or reason; and without devotion all penances, austerities and rites are futile. Man cannot realize God by self-exertion alone. For getting the vision of God, His grace is absolutely necessary, and His presence is felt only by the pure in heart. The mind is to be purged and purified by devotion. The pure mind remains forever immersed in the ecstasy of God vision. It is the cultivation of this divine love that is the paramount goal of the devotee.

Three paths of devotion have been identified based on the nature of the devotee and the quality of his devotion. Of these three, two are inferior, only the third is considered pure and sublime. If the devotee is impure of heart, actuated by malevolence, arrogance, jealousy or anger, then his devotion is of a base and finite (*Taamasic*) type; If the devotee worships God out of desire for fame, wealth, or any other worldly reward, then his devotion is coloured and qualified (*Raajasic*); Only the person who loves God for God's love, pure and simple, with no thought for anything in return, and for harmony of all creations of God, is the *Saativic* (unqualified and boundless) devotee. It is possible that *taamasic* and *raajasic* types of devotion may transcend their bounds and the three types merge into one in the pursuit of God. A devotee possessed of this love would not accept even the happiness of heaven, his only craving being God, always and anon, in pleasure and pain, life and death, honour and dishonour and prosperity and penury.

There are two stages of devotion, the love of God qualified by scriptural injunctions codified by regular methodical worship, chanting *mantras*, prayers and repeating the name of the Almighty and His glories. This lower *Bhakti* might mature, in course of time, into the second, the higher stage, of absolute and unqualified devotion. This higher stage of devotion (*parabhakti*) is also known as *prema*, the most intense form of divine love. Divine love is an end in itself. Although it exists in all human hearts in dormant form, it is masked in the vast majority by ephemeral things and fleeting desires. May be, with a view to promoting devotion to God among humanity, *Vaishnavism* humanizes the God conception itself: God is depicted as parent, master, friend, child, husband or sweetheart, each concept representing a different aspect, or attribute or a different degree of intensity of love. In the ascending scale, the attributes and glories are gradually forgotten and the devotee gains more and more the intimacy of divine communion. Finally he experiences perfect union with the Ultimate.

Bhakti leads to *jnaana* or Wisdom. For that matter, even *Prapati* is a form of Wisdom. When devotion blossoms, the Lord dwelling

in the soul imparts His grace, the flower of Wisdom. The devotee loses himself in the Supreme. He sees God in himself and himself in God. *Prahlaada* says that the supreme end for man is absolute surrender to God and realisation of His presence everywhere. When the devotee surrenders himself to the divine, God becomes the ruling passion of his mind, and whatever the devotee does, he does for the glory of God. *Bhakti* is to believe in God, to love Him, to be devoted to Him, and to be one with Him. Such a devotee is the perfect man with the highest knowledge.

C. *KARMA MAARGA* (The Path of Action)

Bhagavad Gita states that all created beings are bound by action (*Karma*) and are saved by knowledge or *Jnaana* (*Karmanaa baadhayate jantuh, vidyayaa tu vimuchyate*). Every action, whether good or bad, produces its natural effect and involves embodiment in the world and becomes an obstacle to liberation. The law of force proclaims that "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction". Every deed reinforces the ego, hardens the separateness of the doer and sets in motion a series of effects. Renunciation of all action (*Sanyaasa*) is the pathway to *Jnaana* (Supreme Knowledge). *Bhaagavata* suggests a two-pronged method for deliverance from worldly attachment and at the same time to keep performing the worldly duties. It is a state of *Aparigraha* (Non-gratification). To renounce duty is not *Sanyaasa*: when the poor go naked and hungry and suffer all over the world, renouncement does not and should not mean indifference and unconcern.

It is not practicable for human beings to abstain completely from work. Nature is ever at work and cessation of action is not possible or desirable. Inertia or inactivity is death, not freedom nor redemption. The binding quality of action does not lie in performance but in its objective. Renunciation does not mean evasion of duty, but forsaking its fruits. Every action is performance of duty. There are acts of performing duty and acts performed for one's self-gratification. The latter is bad and binding.

"*Karmanyevaadhikaraste, maa phaleshu kadaachana, maa karmaphalahetur bhuh, maa te sangostvakarmani*". Your right lies in action; never in their results. Let not the fruits of action be your motive, but let there be no attachment to any inaction in you. This famous verse contains the essential principle of disinterested performance of duty. All work should be worship, totally unconcerned of success or failure.

Thus *Karma* is the third path to the Lord, the other two being *Jnaana* and *Bhakthi*. Work performed in such a spirit becomes *yajna*, or homage to the Supreme Consciousness for purging the mind of its impurities and defilement and attaining the power and knowledge of the Divine, the True wisdom, which lies beyond the coordinates of time and space.

CREATION IN *HINDU* PHILOSOPHY

Modern science has had repeated confrontations with the theosophical concepts of creation. There have been a number of fact-finding missions and discussions in this regard with painful encounters and converging conclusions. Since *Harinaamakirtanam* starts with creation in its cosmic sense, a word on creation projected by the Indian philosophical schools will open up some discussion and understanding of this vital and age-old question.

Most major religions of the world including some of the followers of *Hindu* philosophy deal with the subject of creation and origin of universe with ardent catholisism and faith. They belive that God created the Universe and all the creatures and things in the Universe originated through His *Lila,* or play of splendid glory. Christianity and the semetic religions which follow the genesis believe that " He hath copied forth Himself in the creation". This is a representation of the ardent faith and not derivative of logical scrutiny. Lots of people are reluctant to accept this concept. Quest to solve this riddle is one of the oldest pursuits of mankind at all times all over the world. There exist answers based on

scientific theories and possibilities as well as revelations of prophets and seekers who have come up with spiritual answers. The thought-provoking speculations of philosophers and the liberal and puritan views of others remain inconclusive and unacceptable to many. Hence the search still goes on with the hope of discovering the mysteries of creation. Scientific and spiritual enquiries have, by and large, failed to solve this universal puzzle.

Vedaanta considers that true knowledge is subtle and not rational and that it crosses the boundaries of both cause and effect and can be experienced only by contemplative mind. To some one who delves into cause and effect, the phenomenon of creation would remain more or less evasive, while it will be self-evident to a contemplative, spiritually inclined mind. The basic concept that nothing new is ever created but only change of form, name and nature or condition ever takes place, is confused as creation. *Upanishat*s describe *Brahman* alone as the ultimate reality, pure being, unknown and unthinkable to sensory perception and mind. The knowledge of the pure being is the highest knowledge, while the knowledge of the phenomenal universe, material knowledge, is the lower knowledge. The conditional *Brahman* is the highest expression of this reality in the phenomenal Universe. Therefore everything in the world, not merely humans, is nothing but the ultimate reality. From the scientific point of view we notice differences in Beings and things of the Universe. The consciousness, the unifying element in the multiplicity, is nothing other than Truth, the *Brahman*.

The *Brahman*, *Ishwara*, is said to be the cause of the universe. The *Brahman* transforms itself into an effect (unity to multiplicity). This is explained in terms of *Satkaarya vaada*, where the effect preexists in its cause. Modern genetics subscribe to this view as the hereditary materials encoded in genes determine the phenotypic and genotypic differences in nature. The *vivarta vaada* further expounds the phenomenon, that the effect is only a manifestation of appearance. The *Saamkhya* philosophy also explains the cause-effect relationship; it goes on to assume that the effect is not only

pre-existing in the cause, but is an actual transformation of the cause itself. This *parinaama vaada* is not acceptable to *advaita* philosophers, who attribute the play of *Maaya* or Nescience to the phenomenon of universal multiplicity. The illusionary existence of the phenomenal world will vanish when *Brahman* is realized.

That which is One cannot in reality become Many; it can only appear as many, through the superimposition grounded on Nescience or *Avidya*. *Brahman* is the cause and that alone is the Real, the effect lying in the cause itself. When *Brahman* is seen from this point of view, IT becomes *Ishwara,* the Lord who creates the universe, maintains it and reabsorbs it in His *lila* (sport). The concept *lila* (sport) conveys that *Ishwara* creates the world out of sheer joy of doing so. As there is no cause, creation constitutes spontaneous release of positive energy for its own sake. Creation involves no motive nor purpose, but is spontaneous. Creation is the nature of *Brahman* just as a man's nature is to breathe. Having no cause nor consequences for creation, *Ishwara*, remains beyond the actions that follow creation.

Other schools of thought, particularly the *Nyaaya–Vaisheshika* schools, propounded a theory that *Paramaanu* (Atom) is the cause from which the universe has come. They accept that the universe came from inert matter (atoms) and therefore the qualities that appear in the creature are not derived from the cause; in other words the cause is not found in the effects. Hence this theory is not accepted by many. Similarly the theory that the world has arisen from the unmanifested is called into question; if the manifested is the effect of the unmanifested cause, the theory has to have a susbtratum for the unmanifested to function. Equally unacceptable is the view of the *Asat vaada* (Nihilistic view) that the manifested world originated from non-existence.

Creation according to *Vishishtaadvaita* (qualified non-duality) of *Raamaanuja* is absolutely real. The world and the souls are as real as God Himself. They are neither created nor destroyed. *Raamaanuja* believes in the *Parinaama* theory of *Satkaarya*

vaada, where the material cause of creation changes itself in the form of its effect. The effect is real transformation of the material cause just as curd is the real transformation of milk. Accordingly creation is explained as the subtle matter called *Prakriti* which evolves into gross elements and the unmaterialized souls become housed in gross bodies based on their *Karma* (Action). The process of creation starts in order to enable the souls to reap the fruits of their past deeds and this process is said to be without beginning so that there ever remains the possibility of past deeds. The law of *karma* therefore necessitates creation. Creation and dissolution of the universe are effected due to the will of the Almighty and His *lila* (sport) is impartial and forever.

CHAPTER 3

HARINAAMAKIRTANAM

I Introduction

Several philosophical themes have been systematically presented in *Harinaaṁakirtanam*. Some of these verses adore and praise the Almighty, while others deal with devotion; yet others provide in-depth details of different paths leading to Self Realization, the ultimate goal.*Harinaamakirtanam* presents the true nature of the individual self or *Aatman* and its relationship with the universal self or *Paramaatman*. No system of philosophy or spiritual path has been left out or deprived of its significance in this sublime creation of *Ezhuttachan*. The 66 verses attempt to illustrate the concept of the *Brahman*, the Lord, the *Ishwara* with and without form, to suit and serve each and every individual. The path for reaching the ultimate goal is demarcated with precision. The message conveyed in these verses is that *Aatman* and *Brahman* are not two but one indivisible whole without a second. These verses were composed in the local language, *Malayaalam,* by this great poet and spiritual luminary more than 300 years ago. The content of *Harinaamakirtanam* closely reflects the socio-cultural and spiritual atmosphere of his times which prevailed in a particular part of the country and was intended to herald a new epoch of spiritual and philosophical renaissance. This melodious hymn sung with devotion and faith is soothing to the heart and guides the devotee to realms of realization of Truth and Eternal Bliss.

Only a few copies of the manuscript written on palm leaves are extant. In fact, *Harinaamakirtanam* had passed from generation to generation by word of mouth, from the aged to the young, and from one region to the other. The soul-stirring thoughts that pervade the hymns are brilliant and magnificient; they are appealing to the erudite and the layman, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, women and men, all alike. *Harinaamakirtanam* can be invoked, its profound thoughts imbibed and its spiritual grandeur

realized in all times and at all places. It is the inspiring and thought-provoking messages of *advaita* (non-dual) philosophy that form its main theme. *Advaita* espouses the truth that *Brahman* is this Universe, all that exists is *Brahman* and that *Brahman* alone is eternal and unchanging.

From the theme selected and the nature of treatment of the subject matter, it may be deduced that the *Aachaarya* lived during times when the social and the spiritual ethos was not congenial to the majority; the times must have been rather intolerant and inimical towards the poor and the downtrodden, the illiterate, the out-caste and women, preventing them from pursuing the spiritual path. *Chaaturvarnya*, the discriminatory system of social stratification and the bane of the caste system had taken their worst toll in Kerala; none of these vulnerable sections of the population was considered worthy of decent human existence, not to speak of the right to seek God realization. The *Braahmanas*, the avowed repositories of knowledge and the privileged and the well-to-do who were well-versed in the *Sanskrit* language and literature, were the only sections allowed to undertake studies of *Vedas* and *Mimaamsas*. The lower classes, the poor and women were simply forbidden from learning *Vedas*, *Vedaangas*, *Smritis* and *Shruthis*. In those days when *Aarsha Samskaara* prevailed, the social system was attuned to the interests of the mighty and the nobility. Perpetual societal bondage and deprivation of the rights of knowledge had, by then, made the under-privileged incapable of undertaking studies of scriptures or pursuance of the goal of God-realization. The society was thus highly in-egalitarian, unjust and oppressive and it was in a process of decay and degeneration. *Ezhuttachan*'s was a moral revolt against this gross depravity and an effort to resurrect the poor from the morass of ignorance in which they were wallowing. He took the message of emancipation and salvation to them in a simple, but extremely forceful language, in the form of *Harinaamakirtanam*.

As no authentic copy of the *Harinaamakirtanam* was in currency for long periods after *Ezuttachan*'s demise, many improvisations

and alternations crept in. Such distortions were also the result of indifference of the society; and careful studies and meticulous interpretations were infrequent. *Harinaamakirtanam* is undoubtedly about the *Advaita* (non-dual) representation of the *Brahman*, the predominant system of philosophy of the majority of the *Hindus* all over India. However, for providing a balanced account of the various spiritual systems and philosophy, the *Aachaarya* dealt with all the paths towards spiritual realization of the Truth, which prevailed during his times. The attainment of Godhood through the different paths was treated by him in essential details and giving to each equal reverence. Thus one experiences in *Harinaamakirtanam*, the adoration of *Hari*, through *Bhakti* (devotion), *Karma* (action) and *Jnaana* (knowledge). Because of the in-depth treatment of the *Advaita* (non-dual) philosophy and the succinct exposition of the paths for the realization of the *Brahman*, the historians and philosophers of Kerala have hailed *Harinaamakirtanam* as *Keralopanishat*.

Prayers and hymns formed a major mode of worship in all religions, creeds and cults all over the world. Their psychological effects manifest in ennoblement of the human mind and unfolding of spirituality. In India the devotional system was widespread during the medieval period, although most of the prayers had been in the *Sanskrit* language, a spiritually enriched language known also as the language of the gods, used especially by the higher castes and classes of *Hinduism*, in their scholastic discourses. The great epic *Mahaabhaarata* was probably the earliest to appear in the galaxy of epics venerated during this period. Owing to lack of higher learning among the majority of the people, devotional songs depicting stories from *Mahaabhaarata*, *Raamaayana* and *Bhaagavata* emerged in all local languages. Profound works carrying philosophical thoughts drawn from *Upanishats* followed. *Harinaamakirtanam* came into existence and got rooted firmly in both the literary and the devotional firmament of Kerala.

During *Kaliyuga*, the epoch of *Kaali*, the prescribed path to God is devotion, pure and simple. Devotional songs, beautiful and

melodious, are sung in *Hindu* homes of Kerala at dawn and dusk. *Harinaamakirtanam* is the most important and popular among them. This thought-provoking treatise on non-dualism is not only recited; it is also interpreted and explained in simple terms by the elderly in the household to the younger members, to confer on them a clear understanding of its lofty message. It is recited also in *Hindu* temples. The chanting of the *mantra*s embodied in this composition transports the devotee to realms of bliss and communion with the God within, the Supreme Truth.

The *Aachaarya* begins *Harinaamakirtanam* with the invocation of AUM, the primordial and omnipresent sound. AUM also represents Lord *Ganesha*, the attribute of God that destroys all impediments. The *Hindus* begin all activity of mind and body with invocation to *Hari*, the protector of all creation, *Shri*, the source of all welfare, *Ganesha*, the destroyer of all obstacles, and *Guru*, the spiritual teacher.

In the first four verses, the *Aachaarya* beseeches the Lord for His Mercy of Enlightenment of Truth which remains shrouded in different forms. The beginning letters of the verses from the fifth to the thirteenth, represent the invocation to the Protector, the Purveyor of Welfare and the Destroyer of obstacles (*Hari, Shri, Ganapataye Namah*). Each successive verse from the fourteenth to the sixtyfourth, begins, *seriatim,* with vowels and consonants. In the fourteenth verse he prays for the blessings of his great teacher – *Shri Nilakantha Guru* – for his endeavour to praise the Lord using the *Malaayalam* alphabet. He begins this verse with the first letter of the alphabet *a*. He concludes the hymn with thanksgivings to his *Guru* (in the sixtyfifth verse) and declaring the glory of the hymn and its quality of transporting mortals from the mundane world to realms of glory, eternal and sublime (in the sixtysixth verse). Every verse ends with *Naaraayanaaya Namah* which means I bow before Thee, *Naaraayana*, my Lord.

The first verse which starts with *AUM* describes the deluded state of mind of the author, its cause and his sincere desire to

overcome the delusion. Hence the *Aachaarya* invokes AUM which also signifies *Ganesha,* to eliminate the three major obstacles - physical, theological and spiritual – and bestow him with clear understanding of the Truth. The first verse as follows:

II Invocation

#1. *AUM kaaramaaya porul moonnay pirinjutane*
Aamkaaramaayatinu taan tanne saakshiyatu
Bodham varuttuvatinaalaayi ninna para-
Maachaarya roopa Hari Naarayanaaya Namah

Brhaman, the all-pervading primordial one without a second, differentiated into three entities with the same I-ness or *Ahamkaara*s. You served as the witness for this tremendous transformation. For imparting that supreme knowledge to me, you, in the guise of my Supreme Teacher, pervade the whole, self-transmitting to each and every individual life form: Oh, my Supreme teacher, *Naaraayana*, I bow before Thee.

In the beginning there was only the unmanifested *Brahman* (*Hiranya Garbha*), which is also the atributeless *Naada Brahma,* the *AUM,* the infinite and absolute sound of *Brahman*. *Aum* is considered the personification of the three attributes or *guna*s, *Satva* associated with purity, knowledge and happiness, *Raja*s with attachment, activity and pain, and *Tama*s with impurity, ignorance and indolence. Another explanation of the three *guna*s is that *Satva* represents *sushupti* or deep sleep, *raja*s the state of *swapna* or dreaming state and *tama*s, *jaagrat* or the waking state. In the woken up state one is completely immersed in the surrounding *Prakriti* or Nature through the five sensory organs of perception, namely eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. Each of these is involved in individual activities controlled by the mind. In the *taamasic* state everything is controlled by the mind and all the external experiences are gathered through these five organs. In the dreaming, *raajasic* state, the mind creates new perspectives and enjoys them, without the direct involvement of the five

sensory organs. In the *saatvic* state or the state of deep sleep, neither the organs nor the mind perform any function; both are completely relinquished and the *Aatman* enjoys Eternal Bliss.

Still another possible explanation is that *Brahman* transformed itself into the Trinity representing *Brahma*, the creator, *Vishnu*, the sustainer and *Shiva*, the destroyer. THAT which was in the beginning unmanifested and undivided *(Hiranya garbha)* now appears to be divided into three components, the Supreme Self directed to each one of them. This self gradually gets tied up with "attributes" and attaches itself through external organs and the mind. However the *Brahman* remaining unattached witnessed all these transformations in the Trinity as well as in the innumerable life forms. In the effulgence of the *Brahman*, the self got illuminated, and the *Brahman* witnessed the world getting shrouded in *Maaya* or nescience.

Real bliss, *Satchidaananada*, is possible only by realization of the absolute and infinite non-duality of the individual self and the Universal self. The absolute is that which is boundless, unlimited, non-qualified, non-conditioned, non-dependent and non-related. It is indivisible, any seeming division being only an illusion. Such illusions are frightening and awe-inspiring to the conditioned mind. Fear arises only when there are two things or entities in existence; if there is only one thing, the self alone, how can fear originate? Through right knowledge this misapprehension of duality is dispelled and all fear disappears instantly; all relativity vanishes and nothing remains to be afraid of.

There is only Unity, and no multiplicity. In the plane of modern science also, though it deals only with things mundane, one sees this unity in the realm of the atom or at the level of the gene. All plurality has but external and illusory existence! There is the one and only *Parabrahma*, that exists at all times, past, present and future. In fact, past, present and future are illusions of a finite mind. There was no time THAT has not existed nor does THAT ever cease to exist.

In the next verse the origin of fear and the way it can be annihilated are dealt with.

#2. *Onnaaya ninne iha rantennu kandalavi-*
Luntaayorintal bata mintaavatalla mama
Pantekkanakku varuvaan nin kripaavalikalu-
Ntaaka yenkaliha Naaraayanaaya Namah

Owing to the illusion created by *Maaya*, you are being visualized as plural, although in reality You are always the one and only indivisible, undivided entity who dwells in all. Because of this ignorance driven into by *Maaya* or nescience I am deeply grief-stricken. I pray to Thee with all my heart, my Lord, remove this illusion and restore the original state of non-duality. Oh! My Lord, Almighty, *Naaraayana* I bow before Thee.

Non-dualism, the fundamental tenet of the *Hindu* philosophy, is introduced and expounded in this verse. In the beginning there was only one, the un-manifested *Brahman*. From That the I-ness emerged. Wherever I and Mine exist, attachment and fear follow. Attachment leads to misapprehension and false belief. Whenever and wherever likes and dislikes exist, pain and sorrow too appear. Hence, in worldly life, riddled with I and Mine factors, there is bound to be sorrow. Sorrow emanates from three basic forces: *aadhibhootam* (physical), emanating from fellow beings, *aadhidaivatam* (theosophical) emanating from natural forces and *aadhyaatmikam* (spiritual), emanating from oneself. In the phenomenal world all these three types of sorrows and calamities are inevitable. Although the real nature of man is purity, consciousness and bliss, this nature wears off in the worldly life. On recognition of this fact, an urge effulged for relief from this illusion and for reversion to the original non-dual form. In order to accomplish this, one has to be showered with Your grace, with the awareness that the Self in the individual and the *Parabrahma* are not two, but only the manifestation of the one and the same Supreme Knowledge, the highest attainment one can have in this life. However, this state of awareness is hard to come by.

The primordial consciousness untainted, pure and infinite, releases energy by its expansion and contraction, and through this energy the undifferentiated entity is transformed into finite energy. This resulted in the evolution of I, which, on further differentiation and through innumerable transformations, has led into manifestations of intra-specific and unrelated diversities: intra-specific as leaf, fruits and flowers in a tree, inter-specific in the manner of trees of the same species and finally unrelated as in the case of different trees and the other life and non-life forms. This conceptualization of systematic transformation conforms absolutely to the modern theory of evolution, though the latter is confined to the phenomenal universe. Protoplasm, the undifferentiated life form, gradually evolves into the most complicated life forms as from *Hiranya garbha* to the phenomenal diversity of Nature. The multiplicity of forms and shapes of objects and organisms demonstrates that the basic principle underlying all diversity is an essential unifying factor. For example, the basic matter, namely the protoplasm of all the cells, even the genetic code which determines the species, is the same, although the growth, physiological functions and other activities of the different cells and genes are different. Thus, the unity underlying all diversity becomes discernable to the earnest seeker.

Grief is part of all conscious life forms in the universe, experienced in different ways and degrees, born out of the engulfing illusion of multiplicity which never existed. More-than-one causes attraction and repulsion leading to sorrow and happiness. Illusions and reflections are the result of ignorance of the essential unity that pervades everything. Modern science provides meaningful explanation for understanding the diversity underlying the phenomenal universe. According to science, nothing is created and nothing is destroyed; but forms may change giving the illusion of creation. The energy lying unmanifested or undifferentiated emerges, on manifesting, as an effulgent and powerful force. The evolution from *Hiranya garbha*, to various life forms results through coordinated cycles of the same energy and consciousness, ends up in the same state of the *Brahman*, with no beginning nor end.

In order to attain the original oneness, Oh! *Brahman,* may YOU shower your blessing on me. Only a teacher with practical knowledge can properly guide the student to the ultimate goal. You the Almighty *Brahman*, You alone be my teacher to guide me to the realization of the Truth. The teacher and the *Brahman* are not considered two entities, but only the one universal Truth. By attaining knowledge from the teacher, will the I-ness and Mine-ness disappear and only Thee and Thine persist.

The *Aachaarya* now prays to the Almighty to ward off this affliction by eradicating the ego.

#3. *Aanandachinmaya hare gopikaaramana*
Njaanenna bhaavamatu thonnaayka venamiha
Tonnunnataakilakhilam njaanitenna vazhi
Tonnename varada Naaraayanaaya namah

In this verse the *Aachaarya* praises the Lord as the sublime form of spiritual happiness and bliss eternal and implores for riddance from all ego; or if ego were to persist, let it become the ego that claims that all is me, verily a reinstatement of the *Vedic* concept *Aham Brahmaasmi* (I am *Brahman*). Oh! *Naaraayana*, I salute You.

Starting with the third verse, the *Aachaarya* illustrates the practical way of approaching the process of God realization. He invokes HIM thus: Oh! Embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, You showed the righteous path to the infatuated *Gopis*; the same way You bless me and inculcate courage and strength in me to get rid of my overwhelming I–ness and Mine-ness. If I still happen to feel confused, frightened and misguided, Oh! *Brahman*, the Almighty *Naaraayana*, enable me to realize my own self in all the living forms. They appear to me as different from me due to the illusion begotten by my ignorance: get me rid of these afflictions.

In order to understand truth one needs to gain the knowledge of Truth; that, in turn, will provide strength to apprehend pure

consciousness. One has to direct one's whole life in the pursuit of truth and surrender oneself to the Supreme *Brahman* for dispelling the duality that encompasses one's life for realization of oneness, the utmost consciousness. But how can one surrender to that effulgent power and enjoy the beatitude of consciousness of the Supreme *Brahman*? The fear of frailty emerges, no doubt, from the illusion of plurality dwelling in one's mind. On the other hand by acquiring the knowledge of *Brahman*, the fortress of frailty could be demolished opening up one into the effulgence of oneness. However, in the illusory world, it is not easy to realize this state of oneness, within and without, due to persistence of illusions of plurality created by *Maaya*. The moment one manages to realize that the attachment to worldly objects is transcient and unreal, one transforms oneself into the real, the original nature of *Satchidaananada,* the existence, knowledge and bliss absolute. By this the fullness of *Brahman* would be realized and the names and forms would fade away and disappear.

The *Aachaarya* experiences the overwhelming joy of realizing the fact that the mental eye which imbibes all knowledge is also nothing other than *Brahman*.

4. *Arkaanalaadi velivokke grahikkumoru*
Kanninnu kannu manamaakunna kannatinu
Kannaayirunna porul taanennuraykkumala-
Vaanandamentu Hari Naaraayanaaya namah

The realization that it is Me who was the source of all understanding of the mind's eye that grasps the sight of the corporal eye that sees the light of the sun, the fire and all the rest, is bliss itself, pure and simple, absolute and infinite. Oh! My Lord Almighty, *Naaraayana*, I bow before Thee.

The *Aachaarya* presents here the highest truth that there is nothing beyond and greater than the Self itself. One who treads the path towards the science of *Aatman*, feels the external stimuli through the five sensory organs. One is part of the universe and remains

always in contact with the phenomenal world through one's eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. As one acquires more and more knowledge through these perceptions, one's inquisitiveness to know more gets increasingly strong; one comes up with more questions and ponders deeper into the ultimate causes and effects. These pursuits eventually unfold to one the truth behind all phenomena. It is not the eye alone that makes one see sights, but the mind which acts behind the five organs; it is the same mind that enables one to feel, hear, smell and taste.

This is in line with the modern scientific concept and understanding that the mind is a computer with all the experienced memories, and that it processes and appropriately directs all signals transmitted to it by the external organs, with all the inferences from the final reassertion. Good is distinguished from bad, and the true nature of things is revealed. As further knowledge is acquired, it becomes clear to the self-seeker that with the external sense organs, the primary observer cannot completely explain the whole process and that a second layer of analysis of the mind, is essential for comprehension. One then understands that the eye of the mind that makes the external eye see, is none other than the I itself. The bliss that one gets from this realization is overwhelming, glorious and beyond description. This state of bliss is the elixir of permanence from which there is no return. The path to this state has thus three stages. The direct experience through the sensory organs of perception is the first stage. Here the experience of the observer is manifested through eye-sight and provides the simple illustration of existence. The second stage is the substratum of mind, which translates the coded messages obtained from the surroundings through the sensory organs into a comprehensive understanding of the nature of things. In other words, if the mind is non-existent, all the functions of the organs would cease, as for instance, the open eye would not see and the ear would not hear. Thus the perceiver at the second stage is the mind and not the external organs. However, higher stages of awareness reveal that it is the attribute-less *Aatman* that is the true perceiver and is the source of perception through the mind and external organs.

This feeling leads to the highest level of realization of truth. The Self is the only truth and all else, illusion.

The same truth, the Self, is present at all the three states, namely waking, dreaming and sleeping. When one sees the same Self in all, one is transported to the state of bliss. Self is described by the Great *Shankaraachaarya* in the following words: "I am neither mind nor intellect, neither memory nor ego; I am not the sense of hearing or taste, smell, touch, nor sight. I am neither ether nor earth, neither fire nor air; I am absolute knowledge and bliss; I am the Self all-pervading; I am the Self, changeless, formless, and omnipresent; I am beyond the touch of sense attachment; I am beyond all bondage of relative knowledge".

The effulgence in the I is present in all; but in order to realize this truth, one should attain purity of mind. The next verse expounds this fact clearly.

\# 5. *Harinaamakirtana mituracheyvatinnu Guru*
Arulaale devakalum arulcheyka bhoosurarum
Naranaay janichu bhuvi maranam bhavippalavum
Uracheyvatinnarulka Naaraayanaaya namah

Owing to the boundless blessings showered on me by my most revered *Guru*, I compose *Harinaamakirtanam*. May the Gods and the seers, saints and *Braahmanas* (learned souls) shower their blessings on me to accomplish this divine task. May I be able to worship Thee and praise Thee until this soul departs the body. I pray to You Oh! Lord *Naaraayana*!

The *Aacharya* implores the permission of his *Guru* and the approval of all Gods, Sages and learned men for composing *Harinaamakirtanam*.

In this verse the author explains a few practical matters to be understood by the devotee as preparation for pursuance of the subject. The seeker should understand the real nature of *Brahman* and the relationship between *Brahman* and the individual. Although

it is explained time and again that *Brahman* is everything and there exists nothing else than *Brahman*, this truth is seldom realized. It is effortless to utter this dictum or argue the facts ardently. The true comprehension of *Brahman*, both in theory and in practice, is not feasible for ordinary mortals, without single-minded devotion. The pursuit should be absolute, soulful, pure and dedicated and the realization of the effort may take many lives of practice and prayer. A realized teacher, a *Guru*, is an essential component of spiritual progress through *saadhana* to accomplish the ultimate end, self-realization. An accomplished, self-realized *Guru* would remove the darkness of ignorance from the sincere seeker through his own experience and impart the needed knowledge. The teacher may use examples, devices and practical solutions for gradual removal of *avidya* or non-comprehension from the student. However even after accomplishing such transformation, the *Saadhaka* should continue all the efforts and practices of spiritual life until the individul self merges with the *Brahman* and attains the non-dual state. At that state one would realize the non-difference in everything: the sun or the moon is not different from *Brahman* or, as *Shri Raamakrishna Paramahamsa* told his devotees, about *Brahman* " the cat I fed with the milk intended for the deity *Kaali* in the Dakshineswar temple is also *Brahman* ". He saw everything around him as *Brahman* and nothing else was visible to him. However this realization would not come to the ordinary soul, as in a practical and finite mind this apprehension is not possible. One has to clean up one's mind and fill it with thoughts of God at all times. In such a state of mind it is better for the seeker to consider the Sun and the Moon as the external manifestations of the *Brahman*. As the *saadhaka* progresses the seeker with unaltered and single-pointed devotion acquires more and more knowledge and begins to realize the truth and progresses towards the ultimate goal. Hence for the worship of *Naaraayana*, these prayers will be of considerable value and will provide the much-needed concentration and knowledge that leads towards the path of God-realization. It is essential for householders, as *Karma yogis,* since they might find little time for meditation, austerities and penance. A *Karma yogi,*

who confronts frequent distractions from his *saadhana*, to attend the chores of life, may not be able to pursue his practices uninterruptedly. If desires remain at the time the soul departs from the body, rebirth would take place which would show strong bearing of those desires. Hence continued practice for keeping the mind fixed on the Almighty is essential.

Bhoosura, the term used in the verse to denote *Brahmana*s, is intended not for denoting any caste or community, but to represent persons who have attained realization of *Brahman*. As the dictum says, one who realizes *Brahman* becomes nothing but *Brahman* itself. The *Aachaarya* invokes the blessings from the *Deva*s and *Brahmana*s for accomplishing the great task of singing *Harinaamakirtanam* without error.

Birth and death seem independent points in the journey of life. But they are not. The one depends on the other and transforms the one to the other. The life is the period between the two points. Any small spiritual progress attained in-between the two points will be reflected not only in one life time but also beyond in the period after the second point. Spiritual exercises and devotional practices have therefore considerable value in the pursuit of spiritual progress. At the time the soul departs the body for its onward journey, it takes with it the reflections of the mind. How can a person train his mind to reflect upon the *Brahman* at that moment without perpetual practice and *saadhana*? This was the explanation given by the great *Rishi, Shuka* to the King Parikshit in *Mahaabhaarata*. For a *Karma yogi* bothered with a myriad things in his life - children, grand children, wealth, fame, caprice, hatred and greed – realization of God, the *Brahman*, would be well-nigh impossible. So *Shuka* advised Parikshit that *Saamkhya Yoga* - pursuing one's own duty (*dharma*) and continuous remembrance of *Naaraayana* – was the only way to leave the body with full consciousness of *Naaraayana* in mind. It is said that he who leaves with the thoughts of *Naaraayana* in mind would become *Naaraayana* Himself.

In the subsequent verse the *Aachaarya* expounds the method for achieving this state of mind. In this verse the *Aachaarya* explains birth and death, the bondage of action and the cessation of life when action is exhausted.

6. *Shrimoola maaya prakriteenkal tudangi jana-*
Naantyattolam paramahaamaaya tante gati
Janmangalum pala kazhinjaalu millavdhi
Karmattinum parama Naaraayanaaya Namah

From that primordial energy originated life and all life forms. The process of life and death goes on in an infinite cycle. Numerous are the lives and life forms which appear and reappear until all the *vaasanas*, or the vestiges of *karma,* are exhausted. The *Aachaarya* laments that even after several life cycles, *karma* lingers and salvation remains elusive. Oh! My Lord, Almighty *Naaraayana!* I prostrate before Thee.

God is the cause of creation. The power of God transforms the primordial energy to life. Birth starts and the perennial flow of action or *Karma* ensues; it continues without interruption till death. Thus life encounters the three phenomenal realities - birth, death and *Karma* or action. Perpetual action is the nature of life and no cessation of action is possible on the temporal and spatial realm. The sources of origin of birth and the destinations of death have remained riddles for mankind from time immemorial. Between these two points *Maaya* or nescience engulfs all actions, events and thoughts. Until truth is realized *Maaya* continues. Science and philosophy, modern and ancient, primitive and progressive, conservative and radical, have incessantly tried to unravel truth. Several materialistic and philosophical answers have emerged. None of these appeared, however, logical or convincing. Science and philosophy are still in their pursuit of convincing knowledge and proof. It is only spiritual enquiries which have provided convincing and conclusive evidence. If we accept the existence of God, we have to accept creation as His handiwork. God and His creation are beyond the realm of logic. As has been aptly

said, God defined is God defiled. God cannot be described or defined by any of the phenomenal measures; but the infinite can be perceived by the infinite self. The Universal God or *Parabrahma* can be perceived only through the individual self or *Brahman*. Until Truth is recognized and realized there is no relief from the perpetual cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

According to *Saamkhya* philosophy the cause of the universe is the primordial energy emanating from *Purusha*, the cause of *Prakriti*. However, *Vedaanta* considers the Primordial energy and all the pervading universal energy as *Maaya* comprised of *Satguna*, the purest and highest quality without any attribute. The *Aachaarya* denotes *Shri* as this *Shakti*, the primordial effulgent energy represented as *Satva,* qualified as the Mother of the Universe. The individual unmanifested self-effulgent and blissful existence is denoted as *Shri* and *Para Mahaamaaya*, the mother of the Universe. This Universal Mother is the embodiment of energy and the source of birth to all creations. Before creation began there was only a single entity, the one without a second, the *Parabrahma*. From the energy, from the *Brahman*, evolved all life.

From the *Brahman*, the Universe emanates and *Maaya* creates a veil of illusion of plurality where there is only one, the all-pervading *Brahman*. The *Brahman* (the primordial energy) and the *Maaya,* are in reality one. Once this truth is realized, the life journey ends and no more birth or death occurs. The truth of oneness that remained concealed by *Maaya*, reveals itself. Birth resulting from the evolution of energy initiates action. More action results in more birth; no action leads to less birth and cessation of action leads to liberation from birth and death. Therefore, in order to stop birth and death and put an end to the cycles of continued action, the root-cause of the phenomenon has to be eliminated. This can be accomplished only by true knowledge. Action and resulting life are like sprouting seeds and creating germlings. By this process more and more plants are born. By performing more actions one cannot stop the effect of actions. Understanding the truth through

reflecting on the reality is the only means to break this cycle. The questions which need to be answered are: "Who am I? What is my relationship with the universe?" Until one finds answers to these questions, *Karma* - birth, death and rebirth - will continue. Enquiry into the truth will lead to realization and that leads to salvation. *Shankara* emphasized this point in *Viveka Choodaamani*. According to him, action should be intended always for attaining mental purity. The *Aachaarya* declares in the next verse his desire to surrender completely to *Naaraayana*, the Supreme Lord, for obtaining the knowledge necessary for the cessation of all actions.

7 *Garbhasthanaayi bhuvi janichum marichumuda-*
Kappola pole jananaantyena nityagati
Tvad bhakti vardhana mudikkenamen manasi
Nityam tozhaay varika Naaraayanaaya Namah

Like bubble in water I again and again emerge in the wombs of mothers and repeat the cycle of birth and death. The cycle continues in succession without interruption. The end of life does not bring me eternal emancipation. I implore for an end to this cycle and attainment of liberation. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I prostrate before Thee.

The *Aachaarya* expresses his concern regarding the extreme hardship one has to undergo for breaking the cycle and attainment of the stage of no return, the ultimate liberation, the union with the one and only *Brahman*. In order to attain the state of realization, one has to overcome the veil of illusion or *Maaya*. This can be achieved quickly through single-minded devotion. He prays to *Naaraayana* for His Grace for granting him a devoted life.

After spending time in the mother's womb, through the cycle of birth and death and indulgence in all actions, we tend to forget our real nature or fail to find time to acquire true knowledge. In the busy cycle of activities, we forget the existence of the Almighty and concentrate on the immediate and temporary pleasures of the

body. Life thus becomes miserable due to lack of true knowledge concealed by misapprehension created by *Maaya*. The wheel of life revolves on and on with pain and misery galore. In order to put an end to this rudderless voyage of life with no destination in sight, this cycle of birth and death, one should have strong single-minded devotion. With strong devotion, the mind becomes pure and actions tend to be increasingly sublime, the Almighty moves increasingly close and Supreme Knowledge ultimately dawns.

The bubble originates from water, ends in water and is nothing but water. However the bubble never realises this fact. Likewise, life continues through recurrent cycles of birth and death. Without knowing the true nature of the self, the life and death experience is considered the truth. This illusion is created by being engrossed in *Maaya*. With *Vaasanas* or qualities acquired in the life process through the play of *Maaya*, particularly *taamasic* and *raajasic gunas* (non-action and action-oriented qualities), Reality gradually fades away leaving false knowledge behind. For removing this false knowledge and lessening the power of *Maaya* one should pray incessantly to the Almighty. *Shri Shankara* expounds this in *Bhajagovindam*.

Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam
Punarapi janani jathare shayanam

"Birth, death and rebirth repeat and the process continues". There is no guarantee that the cycle would ever end. Man dwells in a vicious cycle; when in life, he seeks more and more worldly and bodily pleasures, but always remains unsatiated. Desires put him back into the cycle where he acquires more desires and dies away with larger unfulfilled desires. Accumulation of unsatisfied desires entangles life in more problems of birth and rebirth. Since it is not certain that there might come a stage of final liberation, the *Aachaarya* beseeches the Lord for guidance. Unless one's mind is always concentrated on duties and God, there is no guaranty that the thoughts of God will prevail during the time the soul departs its mortal frame. The *Aachaarya* therefore seeks the Grace of

the Almighty to become able to surrender himself in absolute devotion.

After explaining the pain, sufferings and sorrow of the cycles of birth and death an individual has to go through, the *Aachaarya* moves into the measures and remedies one could resort to for destroying the dark nebulae of ignorance. The *Aachaarya,* like all other *Rishi*s, poets and spiritual masters, urged to pursue single-minded worship of *Naaraayana* as the only means for getting rid of all pain and sorrow. In this type of worship, *Ananya Bhakthi* (single-pointed devotion), God is conceived of as one having form and quality.

\# 8 *Nattaaril maanini manaalan puraana purushan*
Bhaktavalsalanantaadi heenanapi
Cittattilachyuta, kalippantalittu vila-
Yaatituken manasi Naaraayanaaya Namah

Oh! *Achyuta* (the one without decay and death)! The spouse of the lotus-born Goddess of prosperity! The *Purusha* who ever has been since the beginning! All merciful to Devotees! The one with no beginning nor end! Please come to build a play house in the inner-most recesses of my heart and perform your divine play there. I bow before Thee, Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana.*

What a wonderful desire to have the Almighty construct the playhouse in one's own mind! The bliss that emanates from God playing in one's conscience knows no bounds. God is *Chaitanya*, dynamic and vibrant, (not static nor dormant). For the average person with full-blown devotion, such a state will be beyond comprehension. But for a devotee in whose mind divinity dwells, all existence will show itself as His Dancing Theatre. The *Aachaarya* invites *Naaraayana* to His heart, the most covetable centre of human thoughts and emotions.

He invokes God to play like a child always in his heart. A child's play is always a joy; but a child does not always play. It turns to

doing other things. That should never happen in one's mind. God should be there in his playful mood ever and anon. It is true that with ordinary people, the thought about God does occur, but it seldom sustains. It is there this moment, but vanishes the next moment. The mind wanders wantonly to mundane pleasures. The *Aachaarya* wants to keep God always within him. He therefore implores God to construct a playhouse in his heart and stay there playing forever. Once this state is achieved, nothing else gives the devotee any joy. In fact this is bliss pure, simple and absolute. The *Aachaarya* uses this metaphor possibly to demolish the idea that God should be worshiped in temples and shrines. The best *sanctum sanctorum* is one's mind itself. He is there at all time; one would enjoy eternal bliss once one realizes the presence. All thoughts and deeds of worldly import then vanish and only God remains.

From here the *Aachaarya* proceeds to explain the concepts of God with attributes and without attributes and the ways He transforms the devotee to ultimate realization and the ways through the various stages, paths and methods.

9. *Pachakkilippavizha paalvarna mottanira-*
Michhippavarkku shadaadhaaram katannupari
Vishvasthiti pralaya srishtikku satva raja-
Stamo bheda roopa Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

In this verse and the next the *Aachaarya* explains the experiences that the *Saadhaka*s of *yoga* would experience in their path to realization. The cool green of the parrot, the shining green of emerald and the serene white of milk represent the three *Guna*s or qualities, namely *Tamas*, *Raja*s and *Satva* respectively. These qualities can be envisaged and experienced by the desiring devotee, during the gradual and progressive arousal of the *Kundalini,* the serpentine power that lies coiled at the base of the spine, the *Moolaadhaara*. The *Kundalini* moves from *Moolaadhaara* and gradually passes through the various centres and finally reaches the topmost point, the *sahasraara, the* thousand-petalled

lotus flower situated on the brain. On attaining this supreme state the *saadhaka* realizes the Trinity: the *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Maheshwara* representing creation, sustenance and retrieval. The Trinity is also depicted as the presiding deities for the three *Gunas* or qualities namely, *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. These three *Gunas* are represented as separate entities, although they are inseparable and constitute the play of *Maaya* or nescience. On reaching the *Sahasraara*, the devotee realizes that these divisions are unreal and there exists only one, the profound Truth, that is *Hari*. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I salute Thee!

A liberated soul has equipoise of the three *Gunas*. In order to attain such a state one has to meditate on either *Saguna Brahma* (the God with attributes) or *Nirguna Brahma* (God without attributes). For the meditation on *Nirguna Brahma*, that is the pure, effulgent, indestructible, all-pervading and imperceptible consciousness, practice of *Saadhana Chatushtayam* (the four-fold process of meditation) is needed. Both types of meditation arouse the *Kundalini* or the Serpentine energy dormant at the *Moolaadhaara* and lead it to *Sahasraara,* the supreme state in spiritual realization. The effulgent and splendid energy moves in steps from the base of the spine through the spinal cord to the brain and to the anterior proximity of the head. The flow of energy from the base to the top results in the ultimate union of *Shiva* with *Shakti*, the male and female aspects of the Supreme. This canal through which the energy ascends in the form of a hooded snake passes through six centres or plexes. These centres in the ascending order from *Moolaadhaara* are, *Swaadhishtaana*, *Manipura, Anaahata, Visuddha*, and *Aajna chakra*. The results of the electro-physiological studies support the possible existence of comparable centres or nerve plexes in humans. The Chinese traditional medicine, in line with the presence of *Shadaadhaara*, identifies centres with exquisite super-stimulatory characteristics and has been extensively used in acupuncture for relaxation and treatment of several ailments. The role of acupuncture in the traditional Chinese medicine is to transmit waves and messages from one centre to others situated at the back near the spine.

Hence even the most ardent materialist cannot reject these scriptural truths, although the structure, the functions and the effect of their stimulations are not explainable by current scientific observations and knowledge. No scientific conformation of the nerve centres or *aadharas* has been established till now with anatomical and physiological certainty.

The liberated soul attains the super-conscious state where the Trinity associated with creation, sustenance and destruction, the functions of *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Shiva* respectively, could be realized and experienced as Truth beyond *Guna*s or attributes, as pure consciousness. Thus the final realization of the truth leads to the complete merger of the individual soul with the *Parabrahma* or the Supreme Consciousness. As described in the first verse, from the unmanifested supreme consciousness, three separate entities emerged as a result of *Maaya* or nescience. Here the reverse process is described: the multiplicity which resulted from *Maaya* returns to the original *Brahman* or Truth through meditation. *Maaya* or illusion is part of the Supreme, but not the Supreme. When viewed in a dualistic perspective, *Maaya* is the phenomenal projection of the Supreme. The *Aachaarya* adores the Almighty with boundless admiration and reverence upon realising *Naaraayana* as the embodiment of each and all the things perceived by the sense organs as things different from *Naaraayana*.

Through uninterrupted practice or *Saadhana,* devotional activities, and complete surrender to the Almighty, by taking refuge at the lotus feet of *Naaraayana*, a devotee can attain the supreme state. This he reaches in steps, through passing from one stage to the next higher stage. Such a devotee will be bestowed with *Satva Guna*, the magnificent whiteness of the milk, after passing through the lower states of green and emerald, the *Tama*s and *Raja*s qualities. By acquiring the *Satva Guna*, *Brahma Jnaana* or supreme knowledge dawns, so also the effulgence, finally reaching the state of eternal bliss. The *Bhagavad Gita* points out that as a result of knowledge, effulgence enters through all the pores of

the body and illuminates everything inside. However, this experience may not always be similar in every aspirant. Those having preponderance of good qualities may proceed in this path, while those having stains of *Rajas* or *Tamas* may endeavour to attain the supreme state through other paths. Often, all the three *Gunas* exist in the same individual in different proportions. Thus the path each follows would depend on the make up of each, in other words, his total *vaasanas*. A *Raaja yogi*, by his constant practice of concentration, raises the *Kundalini* power to the *Sahasraara*. However this progression takes place gradually through six stages before the energy finally reaches the supreme centre. The ultimate attainment is nothing other than reaching *Hari*, the Supreme.

According to *Saamkhya* philosophy, everything in the Universe is divided into *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. *Prakriti* represents the intermingling of the three qualities or *gunas* while *Purusha* is the controller of all. By continuous practice or *Saadhana,* the bond between *Purusha* and *Prakriti* can be broken, opening the path to realization of the Supreme Consciousness. At this state of existence, all the individual *Purushas* and *Prakriti* appear without differences or individual attributes indicating the complete union of both P*urusha* and *Prakriti* in one, the Supreme State. Others consider the supreme state of realization as an inert vacuum, an idea which is inconceivable since existence is not vacuum where everything which existed ceases to exist or, in other words, the very existence is negated. However, in the supreme state or the *Turiya* state, the union of *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, *Vyashti* and *Samashti, Shakti* and *Shiva,* takes place and what remains is only the all-pervading *Brahman*.

10 *Tatvatinullilu dayam cheytirunna porul*
Etteeduvaan gurupadaante bhajippavanu
Muktikku takkorupadesam tarum, janana-
Mattidumannavanu Naaraayanaaya Namah

In order to attain *Mukti* or salvation, the ultimate union with the

Almighty, the cycle of birth and death of the individual is to be broken. This can be achieved through the annihilation of *Maaya* through *Brahmajnaana* to reach the state of immutability or *Satchidaananda*. The *Parabrahma* can be visualized in its reality by removing the thick veils of *Maaya*. For removing the layers of *Maaya*, one after the other, the help of a realized, compassionate spiritual master is needed. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I salute Thee.

By mere self-education and self-training of the mind, every one cannot attain salvation. In fact, rare individuals with inherent *vaasana*s or qualities of the highest order only could gain the spiritual accomplishment through meditation and service to Almighty, without aid. However the path of self-realization can be made much smoother through the grace of a *Guru*, a self-realized teacher. In this verse the *Aachaarya* explains the need for a compassionate *Guru* for realization as the innumerable layers of *Prakriti* concealing the self, woven by *Maaya* or illusion, are not easy to be removed by all *Saadhaka*s. The compassionate *Guru*'s efforts gradually clear the *Maaya* and train the disciple to cast all his doubts away and progress through the right path to his ultimate goal. The *Guru* can lead the student beyond the cycle of birth and death to eternal bliss

Our life is founded on a number of *Tatva*s or principles and these *Tatva*s result from the sole action of *Maaya*. In his interpretation of *Bhagavad Gita*, the great social reformer and freedom fighter, *Baalagangaadhara Tilak* has extensively dealt with these *Tatva*s and the philosophy behind them. The *Tatva*s directly associated with human activities have been classified and identified as several and varied, by different philosophers. The *Aachaarya* accepts in this verse the 96 *Tatva*s all of which he deals with in the later verses. Despite the illusionary curtain of *Tatva*s, *Brahman* remains the same - immutable, indestructible and infinite. With concentration and dedication one should aspire to realize the *Parabrahma*, who is witness to innumerable *Tatva*s, intended to shape the mundane life of humans. A devotee with quality and

dedication will be able to attain the state of bliss by discarding ignorance through the grace of the compassionate *Guru* or teacher. The teacher, although in this form is *Nirguna* (without attributes) and *Nirvikaara*, (without change), offers the student the right knowledge. Such a realized *Guru* dwells always in eternal bliss. He imparts knowledge in various ways, so that finally the student, the *Saadhaka*, realizes truth - *Tat Tvam Asi*, That Thou Art. Once the student realizes non-difference and non-duality, he rises to the state of the *Guru* himself. The *Guru*'s intention is to uplift the student to his own level.

11 *Enpaapa mokke ariyaan chitraguptanude*
Sampoorna likhyata giram kettu Dharmapaty
Enpakkalulla duritam paarttu kaanumalav-
Ambhoruhaaksha Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

Chitragupta, the record-keeper of the King of Death, *Yama*, registers all actions of each and every individual. In this verse, the *Aachaarya* implores the Lord to protect him at the time when *Yama* the King of Death, on the basis of the detailed report on his sins presented by *Chitragupta*, adjudges the miseries he should undergo. Oh! *Naaraayana*! My Lord! I prostrate before Thee!

In the Holy Bible it is stated that God weighs out the good and the bad (virtue and vice - *punya* and *paapa*) of each and every one, and that those who have more virtue than vice would be sent to Heaven, while those who have committed more sins than virtuous deeds would be sent to Hell. In Hindu faith, no such final judgement is envisaged. The *Aachaarya* is conscious about the cycle of birth and death which would continue till all sins vanish and the individual soul merges with the universal soul. He realizes that only the grace of God would grant him reprieve from the need to continue the cycle.

Devotion to God alone would eliminate the fear of death and the prospects of rebirth. However this verse also may be explained as an exposition of the dualistic (*dvaita*) philosophy. Almost all

dualistic faiths conceive of the judgement of God. God watches the doings of all His creation at all times and passes the judgement. The *Aachaarya* in the mode of the dualistic philosophy, requests the presence of God at the Court of *Yama* during the final hearing and verdict. The presence of God would make all the difference. In His presence, the verdict is certain. In His non-presence, there would be duality, sins and virtues, doers and judges and so on. The *Aachaarya* is seeking God's presence at the time of judgement. The request would be realized if the seeking of God begins instantly. What it implies is that by seeking of God in advance of the moment of judgment, the devotee wants to be reassured of the judgement in his favour. In other words he is requesting God to direct him through the right path so that he will come out a victor at the last judgment. Furthermore, this is perfectly in accordance with Indian philosophy which evolved through the *Upanishat*s and the *Veda*s. There are two groups which ardently try for achieving their goals: the one with merit and demerit ends up in birth, death and rebirth; the other with *punya*, pure and simple, reaches heaven. There is a third group which neither cares for hell nor heaven but seeks only the lotus feet of the Almighty. Therefore when He Himself is present at the judgment, it is completely possible for the seeker to merge with the Sought; the *Jivaatma* to merge with the *Parmaatma*.

Another explanation is that it is action that leads to consequences and qualities, good or bad. For an aspirant, both good and bad *guna*s result in attachment and binding and both are therefore, to be avoided. It is immaterial to the slave whether he is tied up with a gold chain or an iron chain: both interfere with his freedom of movement. In other words, some of the attachments are good and honorable while others are bad and deplorable, but the final effect of both is the same, they tie up the *Aatman*. So the message is to get rid of both and reach for God Himself. The unperturbed goal of the *yogi* is the attainment of the state where neither birth nor death ever haunts the soul.

The gross body is the one with bone, flesh, blood and sensory

organs, while the subtle body has only a relative existence; if there are no *vaasanas* these two bodies do not exist. The existence of the finite body is based on the accumulated *vaasanas*. These *vaasanas* create the finite body on the basis of its actions in the world. The causal body is the one that exists behind the scene. When one is in deep sleep, the finite body recedes and the place is occupied by the causal body. In deep sleep one does not consciously act, nor does one partake of any fruits of action. Even in the dreaming state nobody does any conscious actions, as all actions and their fruits originate from the finite body. The gross body is only an organ of the finite body. When the gross body becomes weak or useless, the subtle body gets rid off the gross body. Once an old instrument is discarded a new one becomes necessary and it will be taken. Taking such a new instrument is what is known as taking a new birth. Thus at the time of death the subtle body collects all the fruits of action and gets ready to go to the next one. All the information is correctly maintained in the records of *Chitragupta*. Rebirth depends on the *vaasanas* carried along by both the gross and the subtle bodies.

Action-filled *vaasanas* lead to birth and life of turbalance and trouble. This result is unbiased and inevitable, but can be effectively altered if the grace of the Almighty is acquired. Action committed in the past is responsible for the present sorrows and pain. This vicious circle goes on for ever unless stopped by devotion and surrender. The perpetuation of the cycles of birth and death is the result of unending desire for acquisition of wealth, pleasure and happiness – all illusory and at best, transitory gains – which needs to be gotten rid off once and for all, for liberation and the cessation of cycles. Perpetual happiness and joy remain within reach of all, but seldom does anyone care to recognize it, not to speak of trying to get at it. The *Aachaarya* understands this paradox. He aspires to break this vicious cycle of pain and sorrow once and for all for which he is convinced that the grace of God is essential. He therefore beseeches the presence of the Almighty at the last Judgment. If God has to be present at the time of death, sure enough He has to be present earlier also; otherwise it is not possible

to realize the presence of God at the last moment when the mind would be feeble and unclear. In other words constant practice is needed to establish God in heart. When the *Aachaarya* requests the Lord to be present at the time of death, he means that the Lord be with him at all times so that he will not have to be concerned about right or wrong since it is the Lord Himself who steers his way.

A *taamasic* person, an uncultured, uncivilized and idiotic person, who lacks knowledge nor has any desire to know God, will pursue the path of his *vaasana*s and get increasingly entangled with day-to-day turmoils and proceed from bad to worse. The one who perpetually invokes God and surrenders all his words and deeds, good and bad, at His feet and accepts all as *prasaada* from God, progresses along the joys and sorrows that come his way steadily but surely to immortality and bliss.

After expressing his greatest desire of having God Himself present at his Judgment the *Aachaarya* moves on with convincing examples of universal truths. Worldly experiences (*Maaya*) are the result of the coordinated action of the five sensory organs and the mind. The experiences transmitted to the mind are processed by the mind into *vaasana*s. However, these organs of perception and mind are dependent on *praana* or breath, which acts or controls the experiences of the organs and directs them to diverse paths. *Praana* is inevitable for the continued existence of the body. The *Aachaarya* gives the example of the fate of these organs and argues that the *Maaya* they create results from ignorance. He also suggests the method to acquire real knowledge. As darkness is dispelled when the sun rises, the awakening of knowledge destroys *Maaya*. Similarly, no moon nor star shines in the presence of the blazing sun.

#12 *Nakshatrapanktikalum induprakaasavum*
Udikkum divaakaranudichanguyarnnalavu
Pakshiganam Garudanekkantu kaitozhutu
Rakshikkayennadima Naaraayanaaya Namah.

When the sun rises and moves up in the sky the stars and the moon disappear in the powerful effulgence of the Sun. Similarly the dawn of knowledge clears away the mortified darkness of the mind which created the illusiory state of multiple existence projected by *Maaya*. On seeing *Garuda* the King of birds, all the avian species and groups prostrate before him in total surrender and seek his protection and guardianship. Similarly the individual soul on realizing the universal soul surrenders and accepts Non-duality. Oh! Lord *Naaraayana!* I bow before Thee!

The *Aachaarya* explains the state of mind of an individual who has become enlightened, or has become a *Jnaani*. This verse may also be interpreted as the elucidation of the previous verse which implored for the presence of God at the time of the Final Judgment. The *jivaatma* (the individual soul) leaves the realm of worldly experience and moves towards the one and only Truth, the non-dual existence of the individual Self and *Paramaatma*. On the attainment of this state, all plurality of worldly existence projected by *Maaya* disappears the way the twinkling of stars and the moonlight, - the reflected light of Sun's rays – fade away when the Sun rises in the horizon. Like the effulgence of the Sun, Enlightenment dispels the illusions of individual Selves and notions of plurality. This verse depicts the real state of a realized soul which reflects the truth of *Brahman*.

With the attainment of Enlightenment all the notions of plurality disappear and the truth of non-duality manifests. Duality or plurality is the result of *Maaya* or Illusion. Philosophers compare this to mistaking the rope for a snake. When the truth of rope dawns, the illusion of snake vanishes. The other example is the post and the ghost phenomenon where the post is mistaken for the ghost; the ghost disappears the moment the post is apprehended.

When Enlightment comes *Maaya* recedes and disappears. *Jivaatma* merges with *Paramaatma* and the phenomenal world disappears. The *Aachaarya* proceeds next to explain the state of Bliss.

\# 13. *Mat praananum paranu monnennurappavanu*
Tat praana dehavumanityam kalatra dhanam
Swapnaadiyil palatu kantittunarnnavano-
Toppam grahikka Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

To the one who realizes the oneness of the individual Self and the universal Self (*Brahman*), notions of bodily existence, home, wife and children appear as dreams dreamt before waking up. On attainment of Enlightenment, the *Jnaani*'s doubts and concerns are cleared once and for all. Oh! My Lord! I bow before Thee!

A person, on Enlightement, realizes that *Paramaatma* is the merged sum total of all the *jivaatmas*, that there is no difference at all between one *aatma* and another, that the differences in experiences are nothing but illusory and pertaining to perishable objects, and that whatever manifest as separate and different are not truly so, but are only projections of *vaasanas* (qualities). Each individual could be considered the basic unit which is the indivisible self or *aatma*. In fact, the individua l represented as the *vaasana*-ridden body has nothing to do with real *aatma*, the integral part of the *Parmaatma*.

Nescience is the sole cause of the attachment to the body, wealth and pleasure. The confounding problems we face every day are due to the false notion that the body and *aatma* are one and the same; this belief results in the overwhelming accumulation of worldly sorrow and disharmony. The causal body formed around the mind through the accumulated *vaasanas* makes one realize that the two are different, the Self and the body. Gradually this illusion spreads not only to our own body but also to other bodies and existences outside of us such as relatives and material possessions. Now the question is how to remove this illusion and false identification. There is only one way out which is to control the mind. How can that be attained?

By forcing the adventitious modifications out of one's consciousness, one can control the mind. In other words the idea of bodies and other material objects masking the clear and pure

consciousness should be driven out. For this a clear knowledge of differentiation of *aatma* and *anaatma* is essential. This can be accomplished only through acquiring true knowledge. It is not easy to comprehend *aatma* and *anaatma* as separate entities due to the overwhelming effect of the *vaasanas* we have acquired and accumulated. The continued dominance of unreality resulting from the acquired *vaasanas*, and the lack of true comprehension resulting from the persistence of congealed ignorance, can be eliminated through soulful enquiry based on well-founded philosophy. This, in due course, would pave the way towards realization of Truth. There are different paths to accomplish this end - through *yogas* such as *Saamkhya, Karma, Bhakthi* and *Raaja,* with innumerable combinations for individual choice for success. The knowledge gained through such delving into Truth would take the practitioner through different, but progressively higher stages, of blissful experiences. However, devotion should not be based on blind persuasion, or with expectation of fulfillment of worldly desires, but solely for realization of the one and only Truth, the only goal, the *Brahman.*

III Obeisance to *Guru*

In the next verse, the *Aachaarya* prays to his *Guru, Shri* Nilakantha, to bless him to accomplish successfully the great work he has set out for himself.

14 *Anpenamen manasi Shri Nilakantha Guru-*
Vambhoruhaakshamiti vaazttunnatinnumiha
Ampottoraksharvumoronniten mozhiyil
Anpotu cherkka Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

With the previous verse, the *Aachaarya* completed his obeisance to the Lord (*Hari*), the Godess of Prosperity (*Shri*) and the God of Success or the Remover of Obstacles (*Ganesha*). From this present verse onwards, the *Aachaarya* begins each verse in the order of the alphabet of the *Malayaalam* (it is the case with *Sanskrit* also) language which contains 51 letters – 16 vowels

and 35 consonants.The *Aachaarya* shows his reverence and dedication to his teacher *Shri Nilakantha* whom he considers God himself and seeks His blessings at all the stages of the compilation of *Harinaamakirtanam* his scheme being to compose the verses in the alphabetical order. I salute Thee! Oh! *Naaraayana*!

Here we see the astuteness and wisdom of the author in presenting the devotional prayers for *Hari* in a style understandable to ordinary people. The alphabetic order followed by the *Aachaarya* is the same which is followed when a child is initiated into the world of learning (*Vidyaarambham*) by people in Kerala in general. On the *Navaraatri* day, after invoking the Goddess of Learning (*Saraswaty),* the child is initiated with the *mantra OM HARI SHRI GANAPATAYE NAMAH.* The ceremony includes the writing of the alphabet in rice by the child with the help of a saint, a learned teacher or a man of letters. Formal education starts with the learning of all the 16 vowels and the 35 consonants. Thus practically every individual in Kerala is exposed to the alphabet and the *mantras* in their correct sequence and order. It is thus easy for all to remember the verses of *Harinaamakirtanam* since its verses start in the alphabetical order.

The author prays to his Master, the great *Guru, Neelakantha,* to bless him with his grace to accomplish the great task. Reverence to the teacher is a well-accepted tradition meticulously followed by all Hindus. Modern civilization has impaired the teacher-student relationship (the *Guru-Shishya-Bandham*) of yore. The practice of *Guru Vandanam* (obeisance to teacher) before undertaking any task has continued to be scrupulously adhered to from time immemorial. The author prays to *Hari* for inspiration, wisdom and ideas for successful completion of *Harinaamakirtanam*.

IV The Hymn

Next the *Aachaarya* explains why he selected this course and the significance of the letter *A*.

\# 15 *Aadyaksharattilulavaayonnitokkeyu mi-*
Taadyakshara ttilodungunnatum karuti
Aadyaksharaalivayiloronnetuttu pari-
Keerttippatinnarulka Naaraayanaaya Namah.

The whole phenomenal universe originated from the primordial sound and it ends in the same sound, *AUM*, the first letter of which is A. The *Aachaarya* has therefore commenced his composition with this letter, representative of all creation. And he closes the verse with his obeisance to the Lord, the Almighty *Naaraayana*. The first letter of *Malayaalam* as well as almost all other languages is A. This visible world originated from the first sound, the syllable A, which represents *Brahman*. The universe is a phenomenal projection of *Brahman*. A, the first letter of the word *Aksharam* which in common parlance means letter, but literally means the one which has no end, no death, and no decline. There is truly only one entity which is eternal, indestructible, without beginning and end, the *Brahman*, while all others seemingly great and not so great, small and large, good and bad, originated from *Brahman* and on dissolution become the original substratum, *Brahman* Itself. I bow to You! Lord *Naaraayana*!

When many other philosophical thoughts continue to dwell upon questions of reality and the true nature of the Universe, *Vedaanta* already had answers to these questions right from the beginning. When modern Science is still debating about the origin, expansion and destruction of the Universe, *Vedaanta* had come up with convincing evidence to explain this phenomenon through scriptures of *Hinduism*, namely the *Veda*s. The Great *Rishi*s contemplated on these issues and convincingly ascertained the relationship between the individual, the pure self and the supreme consciousness or *Parabrahma*, the Universal Self. *Brahman* is thus qualified as *Satyam, Nityam* and *Anantam*: Immutable, Pure, and Infinite. The phenomenal universe results from the effect of the coordinates of time and place projected by *Brahman*.

Attempts to define *Brahman* and God in the same way as material objects are defined, are futile. It is possible to define a material object with the prevailing knowledge of a finite object. The similarities and the differences can be compared with respect to a particular object. As *Brahman* is infinite, we have no comprehension of IT; there are no tools nor measures available to comprehend, not to speak of measuring IT. In other words, the Infinite cannot be compared or measured in terms of the Finite. That is why the ancient masters always explain *Brahman* as *Neti, Neti,* not this, not this. There is no direct way by which one could comprehend *Brahman*, although it is possible to realize *Brahman* through non-material faculties. The unaltered consciousness controls everything and without IT we cannot relate anything that we know of. Always it is possible to relate the altered in relation to the unaltered such as the moving in relation to the stationary. The *Upanishats* dealt with the pure and ever-shining conscious knowledge as *Brahman*. In the *Brahmasootra* it is described *Janmaadyasya yatah:* this is the beginning and the end. This is the reason for the *Aachaarya's* emphasis on this point. This truth is repeatedly expounded in the *Prasthaanatrayi* representing *Brahmasootra, Upanishats* and the *Bhagavad Gita*.

#16. *Ikkanta visvamatum Indraadi devakalum*
Arkendu Vahni kalotoppam trimoorttikalum
Agre viraat purusha Ninmoola maksharavum
Orkaay varena miha Naaraayanaaya Namah

Oh! The eternal one who manifests as *Viraat,* the all-inclusive awe-inspiring Universal form described in *Bhagavad Gita* under *Visvaroopadarshanam* and in *Purushasooktam!* You appear in your all- inclusive, illustrious and splendid form containing in you all the living and non-living entities - the Sun, the Moon and the Fire. You shine in all *Devas, Indra* and all the objects in the universe in Your *Viraat* form. Oh! *Brahman!* I always remember you and meditate on your *Akshara Brahman* state. Lead me on, Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I Bow before Thee!

The *Aachaarya* introduces here the *Viraat* nature of the Supreme, comprising all the higher and the lower Gods, and the Trinity, involved in the creation, sustenance and destruction of the Universe. All these different God manifestations are but aspects of one and the same, the *Viraat* form, which is imbibed in *Pranavam,* the primordial sound which has no beginning nor end. *Brahman* can be meditated upon in different ways. Different scriptures have provided detailed instructions of these methods. Meditation (*yoga*) may be practised through the paths of duality or non-duality or a combination of both. Initially it will not be possible for an agitated, non-tamed mind to comprehend the non-dual form of *Brahman*. Hence meditation on the *Viraat* is a feasible and effective way of worship to pave the way for further progress towards the realization of *Truth*. The worship of the *Viraat* results in the realization of the whole Universe as God Almighty Himself, the one and only *Brahman,* all the individual entities forming His inalienable aspects. Each and every object and entity is a part of the *Viraat Purusha* just as the organs of a living body are not separate from or independent of the body, but only form parts of one and the same thing. In *Mahaabhaarata* and *Bhagavad Gita* this form of worship is well recognized and described in detail. In order to purify the mind the *Viraat* form of worship was recommended by the great sage *Shuka* to King *Parikshit*. In the *Viraat* concept the inferior world or hell is considered to be below the feet, and the heels and the soles form one of the 14 worlds, *Rasaatalam*. From the ankle onwards to the hip is considered our world; from the hip to the upper proximity constitute the remaining worlds. The head represents the *Satyalokam*, or the world of truth. Similarly every organ and every object represents His organs. As the *Viraat* form could not be comprehended in its full extent, the worship always starts with the minutest part of Him that is comprehensible to the ordinary intellect. However as the intensity of the devotion grows, with the grace of the Almighty, one would be able to visualize more of the *Viraat* form. Here one starts with the pure dual type of worship where the worshipped and the worshipper are different; as devotion to the Almighty grows, the object and the objective become clearer. Eventually the worship

leads to realization of the *Brahman* as non-dual existence. This happens when the devotee identifies himself as part of *Viraat* as there is nothing else left other than the *Brahman* and the illusion of individual organs and separate existence disappears merging everything into One. What is left will be only *Brahman* and nothing else, the real supreme Truth. Thus the commonplace experience of separateness opens up into the supreme truth, the *Pranavam*, the indestructible *Naadabrahma*. This is the evolutionary progression of meditation of *Viraat*. The *Aachaarya* explains in this verse how the path of duality is not inferior to that of the non-dual or any other form of God-realization. In fact he emphasizes the fact that one form of worship leads to the other and therefore that dual-worship leads through *Viraat* worship to the final non-dual realization of *Brahman* - the *Pranava*, the *Akshara Brahman*.

Each and every living object in the Universe is essentially an integral part of God who indeed is the generator and the inhabiter in the profound diversity of life forms. How can one comprehend such a power, such an incomprehensible reality? Ritual worship, based on non-abstract representation of God as a separate entity different from the worshiper, marks the beginning of the effort. Even the most primitive forms of worship in which the Sun, the Moon, and the Fire are conceived of as God can be explained in terms of their logic, effectiveness and reality. There cannot be anything in this Universe that is non-*Brahman*, a remarkable concept valid beyond space and time. This is not just an abstract or allegorical idea but represents the absolute truth, conceivable to all those who pursue the path of God realization. This type of worship is sometimes thought of as inferior; the *Aachaarya* and many other realized souls consider it, however, equally effective for God-realization, particularly for the uninitiated and ordinary mortals. In the pursuit of Truth, there exists no meaningful classification into advanced or primitive or refined, or non-refined, methods. The dualistic approach culminates in the non-dualistic, the state That Thou Art.

#17. *Ivanna mohamakale ppovatinnu punari-*
Vanna mullorupadeshangalillulakil
Jivannu, Krishna, Hari, Govinda, Raama Tiru-
Naamangalonnozhike Naaraayanaaya Namah.

The most prudent solution for the annihilation of *Maaya* or illusion from the *Jivaatma* or individual soul is nothing other than the perpetual thought about and recitation of the Almighty in His milliard names. There is no other effective advice available in this world to get rid off this delusion of dualism that has crept in at some stage in the course of existence. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

The delusion of the mind is the result of the infliction of *Maaya*. *Maaya* has engulfed the ever-free soul distorting its true understanding and conferring on it *Guna*s or qualities. *Guna*s result in non-apprehension of Truth. A mis-conception, a delusion, arises and the Self loses its powers of discrimination. Ignorance arisen from *Maaya* becomes dominant. In order to do away with this affliction, this morbid delusion, no medicine exists other than devotion to the Almighty; none other than chanting His infinite names such as *Krishna, Govinda, Hari* and *Raama*. Nothing more sacred and effective exists for removal of darkness, the enwrapping ignorance and return to the original non-dual state. The *Aachaarya* thus prescribes the dualistic approach of worship of chanting the sacred names of the God Almighty to get out from the imprisonment of *Maaya*.

The individual Soul moved away from the Supreme Soul and lost its identity and unity with the Ultimate due to concealment of Truth by *Maaya* or nescience. In order to break loose from the entanglement and to get back to the original state for regaining the all-embracing Truth, the *Aachaarya* promises to all a sure and inimitable solution. He advises them not to get annoyed about this unfortunate, ephemeral phenomenon, since the delusion of the mind is curable. The degree of disability and severity of the ailment may vary, but for all the affected, there exists this time-

tested treatment available for complete cure. Not only is this age-old antidote simple and lucid, it is extremely effective too. *Japa*, the uninterrupted chanting of the name which denotes the Almighty, is recommended by all scriptures and religions. It cures all afflictions, restores health and takes the mind shrouded in *Maaya* to its original state, the *Brahman*. This is again therefore the *Aachaarya*'s description of the approach to *Advaita* through the path of *Dvaita*. But is the cure available to all and at all times? Are there any special terms or conditions to be satisfied to become eligible for it? The *Aachaarya* answers these questions in the next few verses.

18 *Ullil kanatta madamaatsarya mennivakal*
Ulloru kaalamuta nennaakilum manasi
Chollunnataaru tirunaamangal annavanu
Nalloo gattikku vazhi Naaraayanaaya namah

In this verse, the Aachaarya assures that no such condition exits. No matter the mind be the battle-ground of all profane cravings of envy, greed, selfishness, hatred, cruelty and vengence - with chanting of the Lord's name, the path towards Him undoubtedly opens up. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana!* I bow before Thee!

The qualities of human beings during the *Vedic* period were *Saatvic* or Godly. In those days, (in *Satya Yuga*) people led Godly lives. Prosperity and harmony prevailed. In the subsequent aeons of *Dwaapara* and *Treta, Saatvic* qualities receded and the *Raajasik* qualities, ego and lure of power and prestige, became dominant in society. Finally, in *Kali Yuga*, the current aeon, it is the *Taamasic* (negative, base and nihilistic) qualities which reign supreme. *Vedaanta* considers these qualities inseparable and holds that all the three *guna*s may exist in one and the same individual, but in different proportions in different individuals. At a given time *Satva* may predominate, while at other times it may be *Raja*s or *Tama*s which gain the upper hand. This point of view is reassuring since it promises

all souls the possibility of transformation into their original nature, of the Ultimate.

The *Aachaarya* illustrates here the obstacles for realizing the ultimate truth. Moral values and ethical practices have reached an all-time low; lust, envy and greed have permeated all human action. In fact, if these base qualities are not controlled, they may overtake all human virtues and destroy all human faculties of body and mind. In order to begin the pilgrimage to spirituality, one has to overcome these destructive qualities (greed, lust, anger, falsehood, pride, enmity, distrust, rivalry, indulgence, dissension, ostentation, envy, etc.). Several remedial measures to achieve complete elimination of these qualities have been recommended to the aspirant, by *Shruthi*s and *Smriti*s. However, here the *Aachaarya* recommends *Japa* as the noblest path for accomplishing the goal. This, no doubt, is the most valuable message to all, although it should be understood in its real sense. By chanting the name of the Almighty all falsehood, vanity and ego melt away in tune with the pace of purification of the aspirant's mind happening in the course of the *Japa* process. Thus, gaining moral and ethical values should be the immediate aim, but self-realization is undoubtedly the final goal. *Japa* is the best path to achieve noble and sublime results, all on the way to the attainment of the ultimate goal, a path which anyone may pursue, without elaborate preparations, profound understanding of scriptures or rigorous observance of rituals.

The *Aachaarya* explains why *Japa* is acceptable to most people in preference to other paths of God-realization.

19. *Oorinnuventa chila bhaarangal ventatinu*
Nirinnu venta nija daarangal ventatinu
Naaraayanaachyuta Hare ennatinnoruvar
Naavonne ventu Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

For chanting the names of the Almighty, nothing is needed other than the tongue; chanting can be done at all places and at all

times. No burden is involved. There is no need for constructing a *yaaga shaala* (a stage specially built for conducting *poojas*, and sacrifices), or for collecting materials and water from the *Ganga.* Nor is it essential to have a wife to be seated along with the *yajamaan,* the person who conducts the sacrificial rites. What is needed is one's own tongue to chant *kirtanas* of the Almighty. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

In this verse, the *Aachaarya* expounds a revolutionary thought-provoking idea. In ancient times and in the medieval period, people used to conduct elaborate ceremonies and *yajnas*, undergoing great suffering and making tedious effort. All these *Yajnas* were expensive and not within the ability of ordinary people: only the rich and the powerful could afford them. Further, people belonging to the lower strata of society, the so-called *Shoodras* and the lower castes, were not permitted to perform the ritualistic ceremonies and functions. In this verse, the *Aachaarya* expresses his disdain for such social dos and donts. He declares unequivocally that in the matter of supplication to God, all humans, irrespective of place, position, caste or creed, have equal right and freedom. It is by no means the private preserve of the privileged. Chanting the name of the Lord alone would lift a person to spiritual heights, not his passions, positions, privileges and the holding of sacrificial rituals.

According to the *Aachaarya*, no restriction nor discrimination can limit one's pursuit towards the path of God-realization, may it be sex, caste, status or power. In the next verse he makes his position clearer.

20 *Rituvaaya penninum erappavanum daahakanum*
Patitannu magni yajanam cheyta bhoosuranum
Harinaama keertanamitorunaalumaarkkumuta-
Narutaattatalla Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Any one may chant the sacred names of God, the adolescent girl, the beggar, the undertaker of graveyard, the down-trodden, and

the *Braahmana* who has performed sacrificial rites. In India, women in menstruation used to be considered ritually impure and kept away from all auspicious functions and ceremonies, such as entry into temples, lighting the bronze lamp for worship and obeisance before the sacred grove or the home shrine. They were forebidden during monthly periods from touching anything considered sacred, including books and were required to keep out of sight of menfolk including members of own families. Their touch was considered polluting. The *Aachaarya* held that even girls in menstruation may chant the name of God, a direct revolt indeed against discrimination meted out to womanhood by the dominant class. Similarly, he avers, the low-caste, the poor, the destitute and the downtrodden are also perfectly at liberty to chant the name of God and proceed along the path of realization. God of course knows no discrimination. The *Aachaarya* is all compassion to all the discriminated by sex, caste, position and ritual purity. Until recently learning of scriptures including *Veda*s was prohibited for the low castes and for women. But in ancient times this was not the case. The change might have taken place during the medievial period to serve the sectarian interests of the upper classes, particularly the *Braahmana*s. *Braahmana*s were the only ones allowed to have access to *Veda*s. Even among *Braahmana*s, women were not allowed to learn *Veda*s and other religious scriptures. Self-education and self-study of *Veda*s and *Shaastra*s were also denied to all except *Braahmana*s. This situation resulted in creating backwardness among the majority of the society leading to denigration and destruction of culture. Children develop their character from their mother at home and the mother outside home, that is society. Society was deprived of its sources of culture and ethics. Even in such a situation, there is little cause for concern, comforts the *Aachaarya*. Even the lowliest in society can drink from the eternal springs of enlightenment without fear of ex-communication or social ostracisation, by chanting the names of the Lord.

Now the *Aachaarya* passes on to a description of how a devotee should behave in the face of criticism and ill-treatment.

\# 21 *Raubhoshanennu chilar bhaashikkalum chilar*
Kalippapi ennu parayunnaakilum manasi
Aavo namukku tiriyaayennurachu
Tirunaamangal cholluka Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Irrespective of the comments and insults hurled on him by ruthless people, calling him idiot,lunatic or sinner -the devotee should continue unperturbed with his single-pointed devotion to the Almighty and continue chanting His names. Oh! My Lord! I bow before Thee.

The devotee may be subjected to abuse by pseudo-scholars and imposters. They may call the *Bhakta* an imbecile, a madman or a sinner. The *Aachaarya* advises him to proceed unperturbed by such remarks. Nothing should disturb his faith, and his devotion; his mind should be fixed always on the Almighty. This verse indicates that the tendency of denigrading, ridiculing and rebuking the practising *saadhus* and *sanyaasins* was very much in existence during the *Aachaarya*'s times as it is today. There exists a strong view among the so-called intellectuals and rationalists, particularly the affluent and the powerful among them, that what really matters in life is success in this material world and that piety, devotion and renunciation are the chosen paths of the unsuccessful. The *Aachaaraya*'s message to the *Bhakta* is to go ever forward unmindful of what others say. He suggests a solution for the major problem confronting most people. Although there are many *kirtanas* or devotional songs, *mantras*, prescriptions and practices recommended for invoking the Almighty, which one should a devotee follow?

\# 22. *Lujhmaadi chertoru poruttam ninakkilu mi-*
Tajitante naamagunamatiningu venta dridham
Orukoti koti tava tirunaama mullavayi-
Larutaattatilla Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

Even though there are *mantras* with *Bijaakshara* or seed letters suited for invoking the Almighty, it is not essential to use any of

them, as one may use any one or more of the millions of His names. None of them is forbidden for *japa*. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

The conventional path for a devotee to invoke God is to select an effective *Mantra*. *Mantra*s including seed *mantra*s start with some selected letters of the alphabet like *lu* and *jhm*. The *mantras* given to the *saadhaka* or the aspirant by a *Guru* have tremendous power. These letters are used in various *chakra*s or graphic illustrations designated for *pooja* and worship and for invoking different God-heads. In *taantric* worship and meditation, these *chakra*s and special *bijaakshara*s are of profound significance. Temperament, devotion and ability of the aspirant to withstand tedious penance and perform arduous sacrifices have to be taken into consideration while selecting the *mantra* appropriate for him. The *Guru* gives due consideration to the physical, mental and spiritual make-up of the devotee before selecting the *mantra* for the *mantropadesha*. The spiritual power of these *mantra*s is so profound that the devotee will be elevated to the super-conscious state instantaneously. In order to be able to move along with the power and energy resulting from such transformation, the devotee should be appropriately conditioned. Only a realized soul is able to provide the right initiation to an aspirant and guide him through towards realization.

Through this verse the *Aachaarya* refutes this conventional view. According to him, there is absolutely no need to go through any extensive and cumbersome procedures, practices and processes for God realization. The holy names of the Almighty are legion. The devotee may choose and chant any of them without restrictions and reservations. In fact the *Aachaaraya* has simplified the task of the devotee to the bare minimum so that none can raise complaints against, or advance excuses for, not worshiping the Almighty. No *mantropadesha* is needed for chanting His name. This path of worship is as effective as any other which involves *ritual*s, *pooja*s and *tantra*s. The devotee needs to observe no special time and place nor make any

preparations for meditation and for chanting the names of God. The *Aachaarya* recognizes, however, that the attainment of undisturbed and single-minded devotion calls for long-drawn-out and incessant supplication to God.

23. *Lookaaramaadi mutalaayittu njaanu miha*
Kaikooppi vinutanirakkunnu naathanodu
Ekaanta bhakti akame vannudippatinu
Vaikunnatentu Hari Naarayaanaaya Namah.

The *Aachaarya* now asks his *Ishta Devata* (preferred God-head) chosen for worship, why he is failing to get the essential all-pervading and single-pointed devotion (*Ekaanta Bhakti or Ananya Bhakti*). He beseeches the Almighty to brook no delay and to shower His Grace all at once. Oh! My Lord! I bow before Thee!

In the preceding verses the *Aachaarya* indicated that a devotee may choose any one of the many names of God for worship – each name depicting a particular attribute of God or a God-head. The chosen name, the God-head, thus becomes the preferred God-head (*Ishta Devata*). The *Aachaarya* uses the sound *loo* to signify the chosen God-head. It could be any aspect or form of God - *Shiva, Krishna, Devi, Ganesha* or any other. Different spiritual practices are followed by different devotees. In practical life, the *karmayogi*, the householder devotee, due to his involvement in various worldly chores and responsibilities, may not get time enough to spend on ritual worships. His worship would therefore have limitations in terms of timing and duration. He may have to restrict his practice to simple prayers, temple worship, pilgrimage and acts of charity. The type of worship the *karmayogi* makes for potentiating God- realization is called practical or natural devotion. The existence of the world is dependent on the *karmayogi*, as he endeavours to take care of the physical needs of all his fellow creations. His duties lay limits to his time available for spiritual pursuits. His actions contribute to the well-being of the physical world. However, in the event that his mind is not

focused on the Almighty he loses his objectivity and gets lost in the labrynth of sufferings, getting drawn increasingly away from God. Nevertheless by pursuing worldly activities with the mind always fixed on the Almighty, the devotee moves progressively on to higher stages of God realization and increasingly gets detached from temporal matters. Again by pursuing both *Karma* (work) and spiritual paths rigorously and soulfully, the aspirant progresses towards his *Ishta Devata* which he conceives as his saviour, preceptor and guide. In the process, his perceptions broaden, his preferred God-head merging imperceptibly into the Infinite Reality, the Almighty, the Absolute and the Undefinable.

The *Aachaarya,* though aware that he should aspire for rewardless surrender, becomes anxious about his inadequate pace of progress. He also becomes sceptical about his own expectations and appeals to his *Ishta Devata* to direct him through the right path. It is a well- known experience of every aspirant during his spiritual practices that he becomes discomfited with the tardy pace of his spiritual progress. The *Aachaarya* explains that such discomfiture is natural in the course of the spiritual journey. However by merely pretending that one is single-poised and showing steady progress towards realization, the goal would never be attained. False pride is the cause of downfall of many an aspirant. The *Aachaarya* explains how he endeavours to pursue the path of realization avoiding pitfalls of frustration and discomfiture.

24 *Ekaanta yogikalilaakaamksha kontu para-*
Mekaanta menna vazhi pokunniten manavum
Kaakan parannu punarannangal poya vazhi
Pokunna pole Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

My mind, he says, enthused by *yogis* practising single-minded devotion and enjoying *Satchidaananda,* Eternal Bliss, also struggles to follow the path of single-minded devotion. The *Aachaarya* humbly alludes his endeavour to the arrogance of a crow to follow the flight of the swans across vast oceans. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana!* I bow before Thee!

Enthused by the eternal bliss and harmony the renunciates enjoy, the *Aachaarya* is inclined to choose that path. The great saints like *Shankara* reached the non-dual state of existence, where they enjoy Eternal Bliss. All beings, all *jiva*s, and all Gods are to them one and the same, the only Self, that is. On seeing their blissful state, the *Aachaarya* aspires to attain that state. He knows, however, fully well, that he has little merit nor accomplishment to his credit to aspire so. He is not sure whether his aspiration reflects only his untamed ego; he doubts if he could ever rise to the level the great saints had attained. He knows that right motives and right practice are essential for pursuing the path of spirituality. Otherwise it will be like the crow flying after the swans purporting to cross the vast ocean. The swans have experience and strength to accomplish the feat. It is essential that when practising or treading the spiritual path one should move very cautiously and with utmost care, lest one should fail like the crow imagining itself to possess the virtues and prowess of the swan. For developing single-pointed devotion one has to seek the help of a suitable *Guru*. Ego has to be annihilated too, through constant guidance of the *Guru*.

The *Aachaarya* alludes here to an episode from the *Mahaabhaarata*. During the *Kurukshetra* war, *Karna* the great Archer, self-confident and proud about his expertise, experience and strength, felt sure of his victory over his opponents, the *Paandava*s. *Shalya*, the crooked and treacherous uncle of *Duryodhana* and the Charioter of *Karna*, foresaw the dangers of this false pride of *Karna* and his illusions about the outcome of the war. In order to make *Karna* understand the truth and to make him aware of his actual strength and the strength of the army, he illustrates the story of the crow following the swans to cross the ocean. A crow fed by the rich *vaishya*s became fat and proud, challenged the swans to compete with him in crossing the ocean. In spite of the sober counsel of the swans, the crow was adamant. In his endeavour of defeating the swans, the crow tried all his best, but became unable to catch up with the well-endowed swans. Finally the exhausted and frustrated crow collapsed and

fell in the sea and met with its end. The *Aachaarya* alludes to the state of the novices and compares it to that of the experienced renunciates with wisdom and accomplishments, by drawing the analogy from the fable of the crow and the swans. In other words, the *Aachaarya* advises the novice to proceed patiently and cautiously towards the final goal. He should not follow his ego; but should tread the path of gradual persuasion and taming of all desires. The final goal should be the ego-less state, of pure knowledge and bliss, *Satchidaananda.* This state is attainable only through untainted, non-distracted meditation on the divine *Brahman.*

However it is not easy to attain this state of dedicated, single-pointed devotion all at once. It can be reached only after passing through a number of intermediary stages. But, through continuous concentration, meditation and renunciation, annihilation of the ego can, no doubt, be achieved. At the stage of realization, compassion and love emanate, devoid of any attachment or limitation, and flow profusely to every creation. If the devotee is not focused on his goal, practice and attention or *Shraddha*, his efforts will not fructify.

Different paths exist to achieve the same goal and each path has its own principles. The *Aachaarya* has not recommended or rejected any particular system or principles as easy or cumbersome, desirable or undesirable; it is the prerogative of the devotee to choose his path.

25. *Aiyyanchu manchu mutanayyaaru mettu muta-*
Navvanna mettu muta nenmoonnu mezhu madha
Chovvothoranchu mapi rantonnu tatva matil
Mevunna naatha Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

The ninetysix principles include the elements, the organs of perception and action, knowledge and a number of sub groups. Oh! My Lord Almighty! *Naaraayana!* It is You who presides over these principles. I bow before Thee!

On the lines of *Vaisheshikas*, the *Saamkhya* philosophy also analyzed the Universe exhaustively and thoroughly and arrived at the indivisible nature of the *Purusha*. It laid out the principles for analysis and understanding of the real nature of *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. Not only the nature and the nurturer, but also all the intricate actions connected with them have been analyzed. Even though the principles and the associated sub-principles and paths of actions are numerous, He pervades and rules all of them without difference and shines equally in all. By mastering these principles and practising them, one can keep vigil at all times and distinguish *Purusha* from all the superimpositions of *Prakriti*. By reflecting on the various principles one would be able to gradually realize that the indivisible knowledge and consciousness is the nature of *Paramaatma* and that the reflections on these principles lead to the realization that *Parmaatma* and *Jivaatma* are not different, but one and the same. The moment this truth is understood, the notions of the plurality of these principles also disappear. .

However, commentators differ in their views regarding the number of the principles that govern *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. Both Hindu and Buddhist religions have accepted all these major principles. Some agree that the number of principles is 96, while others consider a still higher number of 115. Among the major principles the foremost are the 30 major elemental principles. They include the five primordial principles, (earth, water, air, space and fire), the five sensory organs, (nose, tongue, eyes, skin, and ears) and their five properties (taste, sight, touch, and hearing). The five organs of action and their functions namely, speech, legs, hands, rectum and genitals and the five different types of *praana*s, active in exhalation and inhalation are all included in the principles. The others include *praana* or vital energy which constitutes 5 major and 6 minor ones. The major *praana*s are *Praana, Apaana, Vyaana, Udaanaand* and *Samaanaand*. The minor ones are *Naagan, Koorman, Devadattan, Dhananjayan,*and *Krikaalan:* The six minor plexes are M*oolaadhaara, Svaadhisthaana, Manipooraka, Anaahata, Visuddha* and *Aajna*. There are eight passions represented by *Mada, Raaga, Dvesha, Kaama, Krodha,*

Maatsarya, Moha, and *Lobha.* There are 8 mind-associated principles or *Kaaranas* which include, *Manas, Chitta, Ahamkaara, Sankalpa, Nischaya, Abhimaana* and *Avadhaarana.*

After the plexes, come the afferent and efferent channels through which the meditation force and energy are diverted: *Sushumna, Ida* and *Pingala,* three *Mandalas* (*Agni mandala, Arkamandala* and the *Chandra Mandala*); three *Eshanas (Artheshana, Daareshana, Puttreshana*); three *Dooshanas,* (*Vaata, Pitta, Shleshma*); three *Gunas (Satva, Rajas* and *Tamas*); three *Avasthas (Jaagrat, Svapna, Sushupti);* three *Dehas (Sookshma, Sthoola* and *Kaarana)* and three *Dehaantas (Visva, Taijasa, Prajna).* To these 24 principles are added seven organs namely *Tvak* (Skin), *Rakta* (Blood), *Maamsa* (Flesh), *Medas*(Fat), *Asthi* (Bone), *Majja* (Bone marrow) and *Shukla* (Semen). The remaining principles include the five *Koshas* namely *Annamaya Kosha, Praanamaya kosha, Manomaya kosha, Vijnaanamaya kosha* and *Aanandamaya kosha* and the three *Taapas* namely, *Aadhyaatmika, Aadhibhooutika* and *Aadhidaivika.* Thus altogether there are 96 principles that are also described in the scriptures of Jainism and Buddhism.

The Aachaarya now humbly expresses his desire to get the Almighty's compassion and grace.

26. *Otunnu gitakalitellaamatenna porul*
Entennu kaanmatinu pora mano balavum
Etenkilum kimapi kaarunya minnu tava
Saadhikka ventu Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

Oh! Almighty, I do not have the mental strength to grasp the truth which all *Gitas* expound as THAT. I realize how much I am in need of at least an iota of your Grace to give me confidence and strength. I salute You, Oh! *Naaraayana*!

There are a number of *Gitas* (celestial songs), such as *Bhagavad*

Gita, Ashtaavakra Gita, Uddhava Gita, Raama Gita and *Shaankara Gita* and 108 *Upanishat*s that deal with lessons and instructions for God-realization. In all the *Upanishat*s and *Gita*s, the main theme of exposition is *Vedaanta,* particularly *Advaita Vedaanta*. The *Brahman*, which is all-pervading, indivisible, eternal and full, appears as multiple through the 96 principles explained in the previous verse. However, the concept that everything is *Brahman* is difficult to comprehend for the ordinary mortals who lack the mental calibre and the spiritual yearning for understanding it. All the needed information is there in the scriptures. The *Aacharya* is worried about his inability to progress towards the ultimate realization in spite of the availability of all that is needed to stimulate his thoughts. Hence he prays to the Almighty to shower His blessings to enable him to proceed and progress through the path towards realization of the Truth, the *Brahman*.

After apprehending the truth the great *Rishi*s composed the *Gita*s *(Bhagavad Gita, Vyaadha Gita, Ashtaavakra Gita, Anu Gita, Guru Gita, Raama Gita, Uddhava Gita,* to mention a few) to provide a realistic and practical understanding of Truth, to all who seek the spiritual path. These Great scriptures - the *Veda*s, *Upanishat*s, *Sootra*s, and *Gita*s - contain detailed descriptions of the power that pervades and comprises the Universe. The meaning and the message of these scriptures are, however, beyond the comprehension of the ordinary mind. In order to comprehend, the Grace of God is inevitable. The *Aachaarya* prays for that Grace of the Lord, *Naaraayana.*

The Universe comprises THAT, the *Brahman*, indefinable and all-pervading. In spite of his awareness of the *Brahman,* the *Aachaarya* still discusses the non-dual *Vedaanta* and the many *Vedaanta* paths, the latter being the more accessible and acceptable for the ordinary mind. On the other hand, the non-dual path would be understood, appreciated and pursued by the enlightened mind. Hence *Dvaita* path is also discussed, as both are of equal significance and lead to the same goal.

The pleasures of the world are transient and far inferior to the ineffable bliss one gets out of God-realization. However all the living beings are after worldly pleasures which only land them in increasing entanglement. Not only are they denied of His Grace but they get steeped in the perpetual process of life cycle too.

In the next verse the *Aachaarya* explains this fact attributing the bondage to the world and its affairs to *Maaya* or ignorance, which masks the effulgent self in every being.

27. Audumbarattil mashakattinu tonnu mitin-
Mite kadaapi sukha millennu tatparichu
Cheto vimohini mayakkaayka maaya tava
Dehoha menna vazhi Naaraayanaaya namah

The worms inside the *Atti* fruit (a type of Ficus fruit) may feel that there is no comfort beyond. Oh! God Almighty! why are you covering everything with your *Maaya* and creating the illusion in my mind that there is no happiness other than this body pleasure? Please protect me from this illusion created by false knowledge and nescience so that I can pursue the path of Truth and Reality. Oh! *Naaraayana,* My Lord! I prostrate before Thee!

Audumbaram is the *Atti* tree, one of the four types of Ficus (Banyan) tree considered sacred in India. The fruit of this tree, which is red in colour, harbours worms and beatles inside. The insects lay their eggs in the flower; the eggs in due course hatch inside the fruit and the worms come out after the fruit falls off the tree. For these tiny beings the whole world appears to be the inside of the fruit. They have no idea that the fruit would soon ripen and the world of their imagination would rot and disintegrate. The worm considers the inside of the fruit its abode, its world and the source of all its happiness. The worm cannot realize that the substance which served as its substratum of existence is perishable and would disintegrate soon. Similarly, human beings think that the pleasure they derive out of the world of their perceptions is

the only one there is and nothing beyond. In worldly affairs, we come across cases of 'success' and 'glory' which give the persons concerned fleeting feelings of pride and accomplishment. These 'successes' appear real due to attachment and misconception caused by *Maaya* which veils 'truth' with ignorance or *avidya*. The truth is that every person, as also everything that exists, is the manifestation of God and His effulgence. Like the worm inside the fruit, the man in this phenomenal world, mistakes it as true, real, unperishable and eternal. He wrongly identifies himself as his body and considers that the body is magnificent and that 'he' is therefore handsome; that the body has happiness and therefore 'he' too is happy; in short, he equates his body experiences as 'his' experiences. This is due to the delusion that he is the body itself, not the Supreme, effulgent self in it. The worm is liberated from his illusion when the fruit bursts and decays. Likewise, a human being realizes the verity of his true domain only when the illusion of this mundane world drops and disappears. This state recognizes nothing other than THAT which is THOU thyself: THAT THOU ART.

The soul and the body and their roles are mysteries even for the most learned. Natural and physical sciences fail to explain them convincingly. Metaphysics, mysticism and spirituality have provided discourses that explain the reality that dwells beyond and also within the phenomenal universe. Buddhism recognized the miseries of all life forms particularly mankind. The Buddha himself discerned, through contemplation, meditation and penance, their causes and remedies. *Patanjali* also described the bodily miseries and their causes in great detail. He considered body, not merely as the physical body, but also as attachment to worldly pleasures and desires caused by *Maaya* which projected things and concepts in entirely opposite states, True as Untrue and Untrue as True.

If every confusion and delusion is due to *Maaya*, the remedy is simple: Get rid of *Maaya*. This is easier said than done. It is this verity that is illustrated in the next verse.

\# 28. *Ambhoja sambhavanu mampodu neenti bata*
Vanmoha vaaridhi yilenneda mortu mama
Van peti paara mivananpotataayva tinu
Munpe tozhaamatikal Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Even Brahma, one of the Trinity, immersed as he was in the ocean of delusion, struggled in vain for countless time to get at Truth. I shudder to think of it. I realize that protection from this mortal fear can come only from You, My Lord. First and foremost, permit me to prostrate at your feet and pray to ward off my gargantuan fear. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

In this stanza, the *Aachaarya* is making reference to an episode in *Bhaagavata*, about the ordeal undergone by Lord *Brahma* himself in his pursuit of Truth.

Lord *Brahma,* shrouded in delusion, forgets his self and true nature and undertakes to seek and realize the Truth. Lord *Vishnu* had drawn into himself all the universe and gone into *Yoga Nidra* (Spiritual Slumber). Each *Chatur Yuga* consists of millions of years representing the four *yugas* (aeons), *Satya, Dvaapara, Treta* and *Kali* in this order. Alerted by time, the Lord espied the worlds lying dormant in Himself. A lotus emerged instaneously at his umbilicus and in the lotus appeared Lord *Brahma*. Lord *Brahma* knew not who he was, what the worlds were and what the lotus itself represented. He looked around, on all the four sides, and there grew four heads to him. He saw no world, no life, nothing at all. He had no inkling of time nor space. He stepped into the waters in the stalk of the lotus and descended through it to find its roots. The descent took millions of aeons, but he never reached the goal. The *Aachaarya* explains, through allusion to this *Brahma* episode, the power of *Maaya*. If this is the experience of *Brahma* himself, what to speak of the ordinary mortals! Lord *Brahma* represents the human mind, and the whole water stands for *Maaya* or delusion. Unsuccessful in his endeavours, Lord *Brahma* returned to his lotus seat and resolved not to go anywhere. He

began concentrating his mind, and soul, shedding all his delusion, on seeking Truth. And lo! Truth dawned on him in all its effulgence. The *Aachaarya* concedes that overcoming *Maaya* is difficult but argues that it could undoubtedly be torn away, by calm, collected and concentrated inquiry directed inwards into oneself. Hence the *Aachaarya*'s request to the Lord for mercy and guidance through the right path.

However, a devotee can only surrender himself and pray to the Almighty; the Grace has to come from God Himself and He alone knows when that is going to be. The *Aachaarya* and most devotees are bewildered at the apparent discrimination of the Lord's ways – showering His grace to the deserving and to the non-deserving alike. In the next few verses the *Aachaarya* clearly presents examples to substantiate this conclusion. Devotees at the early stages of spiritual progress may get baffled by the Lord's ways.

29 *Appaashavum vatiyumaay kont ajaamilane*
Mulpaatuchennu kayarittoru kinkarare
Pilpaatu chennu tatuttoru naalvareyu
Mappole naumi Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

When the messengers of *Yama*, the Lord of Death, came with ropes and rods to *Ajaamila* the non-righteous *Braahmana* who was in his death-bed, to take him to Hell on his sins, he called for help his youngest son by name, which happened to be the Lord's own-name, *Naaraayana*. On hearing his name, called by a being in distress, *Naaraayana*, the Lord, dispatched his attendants to rescue *Ajaamila*. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

This story also is taken from the *Bhaagavata*. The story was told by *Shuka* to *Parikshit* at the time of the latter's death. Repentance for misdeeds and spiritual awakening will help in the advance towards Truth and Liberation of the Soul. Ego, pride and anger which had engrossed *Parikshit* had caused him fall victim to the curse that threatened his life. Sage *Shuka* continously comforts

him with examples and anecdotes from mythology and epics to awaken him to divinity and spiritual comprehension.

Ajaamila was a pious *Braahmana*, but got married to a woman of low birth, during his trip to collect *yajna* materials from the forest. He indulged in vices, and deviated from his *Dharma*s. Ten sons were born to him, and he named the youngest *Naaraayana*. When he lay in his death bed, weary and forlorn, and the messengers of *Yama* approached, he got frightened. Aware of the court of *Yama* and his judgement and the dreadful punishment that awaited him, he called his youngest son by name for help. Hearing the desperate call of *Ajaamila*, the compassionate Lord *Naaraayana* immediately dispatched his emissaries to liberate *Ajaamila* from the clutches of *Yama*'s deputies. They rescued him. *Ajaamila* realized the gravity of his sins and led the rest of his life in repentenance and devotion. The story shows how even by the very utterance of God's name, even unintentionally, one is elevated to supreme realization; it is, therefore, not at all difficult for the sincere devotee, who spends time in prayer and mediation to attain Him. This is reassurance for every one who feels dejected due to retarded progress towards spiritual enlightenment. No special treatment nor sacrifice is needed to attain the grace of God. What a splendid reassurance!

30. *Kashtam Bhavaane yoru Paandyan bhajichala-*
Vagastyena ni bata sapippichatentiniha
Nakrena kaalkalatha katippichatentinitu -
Morkkaavatalla Hari Naaraayanaya Nama

Oh! God! when I think about the sad story of your devotee, the great *Paandya* king, I get extremely confused and frightened. Though the *Paandya* king, *Indradyumna*, was an ardent devotee of yours, you subjected him to grave torture and tribulation. You got him cursed by the great saint *Agastya* and transformed him into an elephant for no fault of his nor for deviating from truthful conduct. You did not stop there with your tease-game. You

aggravated his grief by directing the crocodile to grab him, an act which ensued in a fight between the two for a long, long time. I am at a loss to understand why you indulge in such unexplainable acts and deeds. Of course, you did ultimately set him free and released him of all the earthly troubles. Probably, You would do similar things to me who seeks refuge at your lotus feet, to end my miseries and bondage. Oh! My Lord, Almighty! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

This verse alludes to *Gajendra Moksham*, an episode in the *Bhaagavata*. Once there was a famous king named *Indradyumna* who ruled the *Paandya* kingdom in South India. This *Paandya* king was a very staunch devotee of Lord *Vishnu*. This magnanimous king went to *Malayaachalam (the Malaya* Hills*)* to do severe *tapas* (penance). The great Sage *Agastya* happened to pass through the mountains in which *Indradyumna* was conducting penance. The king failed to take notice of the arrival of the Sage since he was fully absorbed in meditation. *Agastya* took it for disrespect shown to him on the part of the king. The Sage cast a curse on the king whereby he was transformed into an elephant. The elephant roamed in the forest for a long time. Once, he went to the river to drink. While drinking, a crocodile grabbed his feet and pulled him down into the river. There ensued a fight between the two which lasted a millennium. The elephant became weak and weary. He plucked a lotus flower from the waters and offered it to *Vishnu*, his Lord and Saviour and prayed for deliverance. Lord *Vishnu* became pleased with the steadfast devotion of the *Paandya* king-turned elephant, killed the crocodile and granted him deliverance from all bondage once and for all.

The *Aachaarya* introduced this verse to show that the Almighty tests all His devotees by giving them suffering and misery before granting them *Moksha* (Deliverance). Similar stories abound in the scriptures of other religions as well. The *Aachaarya* here expresses his awe and admiration of the unique ways of the Lord. He cautions, in this verse, all devotees not to judge God's ways by human standards and logic.

The *Aachaarya* next illustrates one more instance of the Lord's mysterious ways.

\# 31. *Khatvaanganenna dharaniswarannu kaankoru*
Muhurtena ni gati kotuppaanu mentu vidhi
Ottalla nin kalikalippole tangalil vi-
Rudhangalaayavakal Naaraayanaaya namah

Contrary to what you did to the *Pandya* king, my Lord, you granted instant salvation to *Khatvaanga*, the king who belonged to the *Soorya* (Sun) dynasty, without subjecting him to any suffering or pains. How come you did this to him? Numberless are such frolicks of yours, one in utter contrast with another. Only you know why. I am ignorant and incompetent to understand the divine principle that lies beneath. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

This also refers to an episode in *Bhaagavata*. *Khatwaanga*, also known as King *Dileepa,* participated in the war between *Deva*s (gods) and *Asura*s (demons). He fought bravely and fiercely and defeated the *Asura*s. *Devendra*, the King of *Devas,* was pleased with his service. But he found from the horoscope of *Dilipa* that his (*Dilipa*'s) life would come to an end in a matter of less than an hour. *Dilipa* hastily returned to his kingdom on earth and spent the rest of the time in his life, in total devotion. Of course, *Khatwaanga* had been an ardent devotee of the Almighty right from his childhood and practised complete renunciation from temporal enjoyments. In less than an hour, he attained the lotus feet of the Almighty spontaneously and effortlessly.

The Almighty's ways are apparently inscrutable and unexplainable by human logic. However, all are the children of God and every one would have the same destination, no matter, how different the paths chosen are. The *vaasana*s or acquired qualities, the culture and the *dharma* developed will determine the pace and the patterns of reaching the goal.

However, actions of Yours, Oh! *Naaraayana*!, are not only confusing to your devotees but to all else.

\# 32. *Garvichu vannoru Jaraasandhanodu yudhi*
Chovvodu nilpatinnu poraaninakku balam
Avvaaridhou dahana baanam toduttatu ti-
Lappippatinnu mati Naaraayanaaya namah

When *Jaraasandha* challenged You to take up fight with him, You fled to *Dwaaraka* since you lacked the strength for a confrontation. However, when *Varuna*, the God of the Oceans, ignored your wish, You threatened to send arrows to boil the oceans and dry up all their waters instantaneously. You readily conceded defeat to a weak foe, while you brought to your feet in submission a mighty and formidable divine force. What a contradiction. I fail to understand your mysterious ways. Oh! My Almighty! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

Here the *Aachaarya* illustrates two different episodes from mythology, one from *Bhaagavata* and the other from *Raamaayana*. The *Jaraasandha* episode is taken from *Bhaagavata.* The king of *Magadha*, worried over the lack of progeny for sustaining his kingdom, married twice. As he was spending his life in grief, the holy saint *Bhrigu,* visited him. On hearing the king's lamentations, *Bhrigu* gave him a mango to be given to his wife for her to give birth to a son. The king divided the mango into two and gave one part each to his two wives. In due course both became pregnant. Each one of his wives gave birth to one half the body of a child. Disappointed over his ill luck the king threw away the two pieces. A demon named *Jara* took the two parts of the body and joined them. And the child immediately gained life and was named *Jaraasandha,* meaning, joined by *Jara*. *Jaraasandha* became in due course, a mighty warrior and conquered several kingdoms, small and large. Krishna's uncle and arch enemy, *Kamsa* married *Jaarasandha*'s daughter. *Jaraasandha*, on hearing the demise of *Kamsa* at the hands of *Krishna*, sent his a y to encircle *Mathura*, where *Krishna*, the

Lord, was living and challenged him to war. The war was repeated seventeen times, each time *Krishna* defeating *Jaraasandha* and his army, but letting him go unharmed. The eighteenth time, instead of encountering *Jaraasandha, Krishna* fled from *Mathura,* constructed a fortress in mid-ocean and lived there. The fortress came to be known as *Dwaaraka*. The *Aachaarya* blames the Lord for his weakness to counter the attack of *Jaraasandha*.

The second is an allusion to an episode in the great epic *Raamaayana*. *Raama*, the Lord, asked for help from *Varuna,* the God of the Oceans, for building a sea bridge to Lanka to fight the *Raakshasa* king *Raavana* who had kidnapped *Sita*. Even after severe meditation for three days, *Varuna* did not appear. *Raama* got angry and decided to teach *Varuna* a lesson. He ordered *Lakshmana,* his younger brother, to bring his bow and arrows. Angry *Raama* intended to boil and evaporate the ocean with his divine arrows. Even at the thought of *Raama* sending arrows to the sea, *Varuna* got frightened and fell at the feet of *Raama*. What a contrast! In one instance, He feigns weakness and in the next He is tempestuous and ruthless. Similar unpredictable actions of Yours are many and difficult to comprehend. (*Jaraasandha* was destined to be killed by *Bhima* and hence *Krishna* deftly moved away avoiding a confrontation).

In the next verse, the *Aachaarya* gives further instances of apparently contradictory attitudes of the Lord, one of a love-lorn husband and the other of a lover teasing the damsels who fell for him.

33. *Gharmaatapam kulir nilaavennu tampiyotu*
Chemme paranju nija patnim pirinjalavu
Tanne pirinju marukicha mrigaakshi kale
Vrindavanattilatha Naaraayanaaya Namah.

On separation from *Sita, Raama* became so grief-striken and love-lorn that he lost his faculties of enjoying beauty, softness,

coolness and fragrance. Unable to bear the loss of *Sita*, he laments bitterly and his words became incoherent and blabbering. He told *Lakhsmana* that he found moonlight scaldingly hot, in the absence of *Sita*. However, during *Krishnaavataara* the story turned turtle. *Krishna* left the *Gopi*s, his amorous devotees, in the lurch by disappearing from them in the midst of their courting jubilations. The *Gopi*s wailed heart-rendingly and searched for *Krishna* fervently and feverishly for long. But He showed no compassion towards them. The Lord's ways are inscrutable. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

When *Sugriva*, the king of *Kishkintha,* failed to obtain information about *Sita* and to initiate action to find *Sita,* You became annoyed, disappointed and angry. Thus *Sita*'s separation brought anger to You, but You were unconcerned about the anguish of the *Gopi*s. They were left searching for you all over. Oh! My Lord! You refused to listen to their implorations and left them in agony. (The explanation for testing the *Gopi*s by deserting them for a while, is that they had to be cleansed of their ego before becoming eligible for God-realisation). Thus every action and every word of yours has a purpose, the purpose of uplifting your devotees to the ultimate goal. But your real purpose is seldom understood by ordinary mortals.

The next two verses also deal with Lord *Krishna*'s seemingly contradictory actions. However, we should keep in mind that the Almighty is not partisan nor partial. For the mundane and the ignorant His ways might appear capricious. The principles that govern all creation are always and forever the same. The apparent contradictions in the dispensation of His judgement are, however, infinite. The *Aachaarya* illustrates two more instances of apparent contradiction in the following verse.

34. *Ngaanam kanakke yuta nanchaksharangalute*
Oonam varuttiyoru naktancharikku bata
Koonnoru daasiye manojnaangi yakkiyatu-
Monnalleyaalu Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

Shoorpanakha, the demoness, overcome by lust, entreated Your indulgence during Your sojourn in the forest; but You, Oh! *Raama*!, not only rejected her request, but punished her severely – cut off her nose, ears and breasts. By cutting off her nose, her ability to pronounce the five nasal sounds was impaired. However, in your *Krishna* incarnation, You mercifully transformed *Kubja*, the hunch-backed woman servant of *Kamsa* - the perpetrator of crimes against You - and Your arch enemy, into a dazzling damsel, in an instant. Were not these two acts, apparently quite contrasting to each other, done by one and the same You, My Lord! How do we fathom the depths of Your wisdom! Oh! My Lord Almighty! I bow before Thee!

Here the *Aachaarya* again cites two episodes, one from *Raamaayana* and the other from the *Mahaabhaarata*. While *Raama* was undergoing his fourteen-year exile in the forest, in company with His consort *Sita* and younger brother *Lakshmana*, in deference to His father's command made under the instigation of His step-mother, *Kaikeyi*, He had to confront the lusty advances of *Shoorpanakha*, the sister of the Demon King *Raavana*. She implored to *Raama* to marry her. All His reasoning to convince her failed. Distraught by *Raama*'s refusal of her implorations, she turned wild and darted towards *Sita* in a bid to do away with her, so that *Raama* might change his mind. The infuriated *Raama* ordered *Lakhsmana* to chase *Shoorpanakha* away. *Lakshmana* ran into a rage and cut in a single swish of his sword, her nose, ears and breasts. However, the self-same You, in the incarnation of *Krishna*, meted out an entirely different treatment to *Kubja*, the hunch-back. *Kamsa* had invited *Krishna* and his brother *Balaraama* to his palace to participate in a *Yajna*. This was the opportunity the brothers had long been awaiting to punish *Kamsa* for malevolence and misdeeds. On their way to *Kamsa*'s palace they met *Kubja*, the ugly-looking hunch-back carrying perfumes to the King. They asked her whether she would give them the perfumes a request to which she whole-heartedly and devoutly obliged. You *Krishna*, by just touching her chin with Your blessed hands, transformed her into an enchanting damsel. The principle

involved in the divergent ways You treated the two women is beyond comprehension. You turned the one bestowed with extreme charm into an ugly being; while the other one, ugly and uncouth, was transformed into a beautiful damsel. What a paradox and puzzle!

In the next verse, the *Aachaarya* cites still another example of the Lord's mysterious ways, the differential treatment meted out to two brothers.

35. *Chammatti poontu Katinjaanum murukkiyuta-*
Nindraatmajannu yudhi ter pootti ninnu bata
Chemme maranjoru sharam kontu konnatu-
Morindraatmajanne Hari Naaraayanaaya namah

In the *Kurukshetra* war, You, in Your *Krishna* incarnation, served a son of *Indra (Arjuna)* as his charioteer, fully equipped with whip and lash and reins; the self-same You, in Your incarnation of *Raama*, killed another son of *Indra* (the monkey-king *Baali)* and that too treacherously without opposing him direct. Your ways are mysterious. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

The episode of *Baali* is taken from *Raamaayana*. *Baali* and *Sugriva* were brothers fighting each other for long, caused by a misunderstanding. *Baali* the elder brother, the son of *Indra,* was equipped with boons of strength and valour received from gods for his devotion and penance. He was blessed with a boon according to which he could draw to himself one-half the powers of his opponents during fights. This meant that nobody could defeat him in a face-to-face fight, not even the God Almighty. *Raama* could not, therefore, fight with him and kill him in a direct encounter. Hence, He directed *Sugriva* to challenge *Baali* to a duel which *Baali* readily fell for. While the duel was on, *Raama* sent an arrow from behind a tree and killed *Baali*.

In *Mahaabhaarata,* on the other hand, the war with the *Kauravas* was waged by the *Paandavas* for a righteous cause.

Paandavas had been denied their legitimate rights to land, power and family by the unserupulous and treacherous designs of their cousins, the *Kauravas*. *Krishna*, related to both the parties through marriage, made many an overture to the rival groups for an amicable settlement, but failed since *Kauravas* refused to see reason. *Krishna* was insulted and abused. The Kings of the various countries of *Aryaavarta* aligned themselves with the *Kauravas*. *Krishna* being related to both the parties decided not to take up arms at the war. However, He offered his army to one group (the *Kauravas*, who opted for it) and Himself, unarmed though, to the other side (the *Paandavas*). The *Kauravas* were carried away by thoughts of the strength of the army, while *Arjuna* wanted only the unarmed *Krishna* with him. When *Arjuna* collapsed and broke down on the chariot even before the battle began, fight, *Krishna* comforted him and gave the supreme message of *Dharma*. This message, the moral and spiritual counsel of Krishna is known as *Bhaagavad Gita*. Thus, in this *Krishna* episode, the Lord served as charioteer in the battle field, another son of *Indra, Arjuna,* and led him to victory and supreme knowledge.

Thus You became the saviour of one son of *Indra* and the killer of another son of *Indra*. How do we, ordinary mortals, apprehend Your inscrutable ways!

The *Aachaarya* states in the next verse that the Glory of God is beyond the comprehension of man.

36. *Chhannatvamaarnna kanal pole niranjulakil*
Chinnunna nin mahimayaarkkum tirikkarutu
Annannu kantatine vaazhtunnu maamunika-
Lennatre tonni Hari Naaraayanaya Namah.

God is all-pervading; but He is also like embers covered by ash. The ash of *Maaya* conceals the fire of His effulgence. Because of *Maaya,* ordinary mortals do not understand the Truth that lies hidden. Our knowledge comes from glimpses of the Truth reached to the *Rishis* from time to time. Though the *Rishis* have only

limited experience of the Infinity, they have divulged their experience for the benefit of mankind. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

It is not possible for any one to understand *Brahman* by any means known to the material world. The *Rishi*s get their revelations at some points in time which they celebrate. However, these pieces of revelation cannot add up to the whole since each may pertain to a different aspect and remain non-comparable with one another. The embers underneath the ashes may not be perceivable to the naked eye. Similarly what the Almighty has concealed under the veil of *Maaya* may not be perceivable to the ordinary mind. However, the great sages get glimpses of the glory of the Almighty through their severe penance and meditation. Whatever has been revealed becomes a source for further pursuit. Yet, all their revelations put together add up but to a tiny part of the whole *Brahman*. If these revelations themselves are splendid and brilliant, I wonder what would Your full effulgence be!

The *Brahman* is invisible to our eyes and incomprehensible to our sensory organs. However, he is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. His splendour, beauty and effulgence are difficult to comprehend even to great *Rishi*s, leave alone ordinary mortals. The *Upanishat*s and other *Vedic* scriptures reveal truths of parts of *Brahman*; any attempt to fathom the boundless Truth with the yardstick of limited knowledge would turn futile. How could one ever aspire to realize the infinite with finite means?

The *Aachaarya* conveys in this verse the idea that with realization of Truth, the realized and the reality become one and the same, the non-dual infinitude. No knowledge or principle is gained without applying theory into practice. Knowledge without experience is unverified theory. The great Saints have revealed their experience; the path they have opened helps all those who want to pursue Truth.

The Almighty, omnipotent and omnipresent, exists in all creations. This supreme truth is further expounded in the next verse.

\# 37. *Jantukkalullil vilasitunna ninnutaya*
Bandham vitaate paripoornaatmanaa satatam
Thantou mani prakara bhedangal pole para-
Mententu jaata miha Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Consciousness existing in every life form ties them all together as thread does in a chain of variegated pearls. In Nature exist life forms - plants, animals, birds, amphibians, fishes and microbes. All life forms have in them the thread that binds them together, God consciousness. My salutions to you, *Naaraayana*!

The *Aachaarya* emphasizes that the light of consciousness is immanent in all beings and there is no need to search for it elsewhere. Once the pure consciousness is realized, *Brahman* is experienced from within and everywhere else. No place exists where He does not dwell or any object that does not have Him in. Like variegated beads and gems threaded together in a necklace, the *Brahman* connects all living forms. The same truth was stated in *Bhagavad Gita*, where *Krishna* explains to *Arjuna* that God is present in all creations as the effulgent source of Self. This verse also answers the questions that *saadhaka*s frequently come across. Living forms are numerous and divergent. Each form has its distinct life patterns, appearances and functions. Are these differences due to different consciousness present in them? The *Aachaarya* clarifies that the consciousness present in them – man and beast, plant and aquatic life forms – is one and the same, the same *Ishwara*. There is no less nor more of Him in any of His creations and no comparison among them is warranted.

The *Aachaarya* proceeds to tell how Creation began with sound and how the Creator dwells in diverse forms in the whole Creation.

\# 38. *Jhjam kaara naadamiva yogindrarullilumo*
Rotunna gitakalilum paal payodhiyilum
Aakaashavithiyilu monnaay niranjarulu
Maananda roopa Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

You dwell in the sound *Jham* which resounds in the consciousness of great *Rishi*s; in the melodious songs sung in Your praise; in the tumultuous waves of the ocean of milk (*Paalaazhy*) and in the reverberations of the vast expanse of sky and space. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

Lord *Krishna* explained to *Arjuna* the universal presence of THAT in everything. He said: the universe is not conjoined to me, Arjuna, but it is Me Myself and in Me do all exist. Look inside to find the Truth, not outside. On realizing the all-pervading source of THAT, Sage *Ashtaavakra* uttered thus: *Soham Namaamyaham* (I salute myself).

The universe, whether in its void or in its plethoric manifestation, is steeped in the reverberation of the sound *Jham*. Modern science has confirmed the constant existence of sound at every point of the universe. In like manner, the Almighty exists everywhere in the form of consciousness pervading everything. This sound which fills the universe reverberates in the minds of *Rishi*s enlightening them of His all-pervading presence.

Scriptures allude to *Naada Brahma, Brahma* in the form of *naada* or sound. This sound reverberates inside and outside of all life forms.

Bliss is the nature of all individual souls. There are three states of experience: existence, knowledge and bliss. While bliss is the state of eternal joy and appears different from the other two, all the three are actually one and the same, in their essential state. The din around us created by *Maaya* or ignorance, might engulf *Naada Brahma*; the *jham* sound may become inaudible and incomprehensible to the ordinary human beings. Similarly because of fear, anxiety, and a horde of flimsy and foolish distractions of the mind, bliss may remain beyond reach. Although the original nature of everybody is *Sachidaananda,* because of *vaasana*s, negative actions and agitations of the mind, man is led astray.

If man has gone astray, does any opportunity exist for him to regain bliss? The *Aachaarya* takes up this question in the next verse.

\# 39. *Njaanennu mishwaranitennum valarnnalavu*
Jnaanadwayangal palatuntaayatinnu mahaa-
Moham nimittamitu pokum prakaaramatu
Chetassilaaka mama Naaraayanaaya Namah.

As a result of the illusion that the individual is different from God, dualities and pluralities appear everywhere. All truth gets blurred and distorted. Only if Truth is realized would this illusion disappear. Truth would dawn in the mind only with the mercy of God. The *Aachaarya* therefore prays the Almighty to shower mercy on him. Oh! My Lord! Almighty! I bow before Thee!

The truth is that there is only one, the undivided and universal *Brahman*, that is the Universe itself, that pervades and fills the whole universe. The primordial and all-pervading Truth is the same *Brahman* without a second. In the *Veda*s the *Brahman* is defined variously as *Prajnaanam Brahmam (K*nowledge alone is *Brahman*), *Tat Tvam Asi (That Thou Art)*, *Ayam Aatmam Brahmam* (This *Aatma* is *Brahman*) and *Aham Brahmaasmi* (Myself is *Brahman).* So in the *Vedic* scriptures, *Brahman* is clearly described as Eternal - the Indivisible and the Embodiment of Truth, which is nothing but the reality of Non-duality. There exists nothing but *Brahman*. *Rishi*s, who explored the subject of duality and pondered on the cause, realized the Truth of Non-Duality. The illusion of duality of *Brahman* and non-*Brahman*, although transitory, appears as reality to the ordinary mind, due to lack of correct perception and understanding. *Gautama*, the propounder of *Nyaaya vaada*, states that by removing lack of knowledge, that is by imbibing the right knowledge, all the negativities would vanish. When negativity vanishes, activity declines and in time ceases to exist. When activity ceases, the cycle of rebirth ends and all sorrows vanish. In order to end sorrows one has to find a proper teacher or *Guru* and practise

meditation under his constant direction. By repeated *Mananam* (analysis of what is heard) the disciple can expel all negative forces and reach the one and only Truth, the non-dual *Brahman*.

The duality existing in the universe may be explained in terms of illusion. However, how does one explain the multiplicity of gods? To this question, the *Aachaarya* turns next.

40. *Tankam kurangavu metuttittu paatiyutal*
Shankham rathaangavu metuttittu paatiyutal
Ekaaksharam tava hiroopam ninappavanu
Pokunnu moha vazhi Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Oh! *Shankaranarayana*! In your half-body representing *Shiva,* you hold in your hands the emblems of deer and axe and in the other half-body representing *Vishnu*, you have in your hands *Conch* and *Chakra*. Your essential form is confined however to a single syllable. Whoever meditates on you in this form gets rid of all illusion. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

The belief in the existence of innumerable gods and their worship prevents the progress of the devotee to Truth. The idea of multiple god-heads may divest and dissipate one's spiritual pursuits and delay one's approach to Truth, the Non-dual *Paramaatma*. However worship and surrender to God is the only way to get rid of *Maaya*. There exist differences among the different God concepts. Are these differences true or illusory?

In the previous verse it is stated that desire, the foremost impediment to spiritual progress and realization of the non-dual *Brahman*,could be annihilated by two time-tested methods. One is unadulterated devotion to God and the other meditation on the *pranava* or *AUM*. These two separate paths are emphasized and explained in this verse. *Shiva* and *Vishnu* are conceived of ordinarily as two. There was a period in Indian history when *Shaivism* and *Vaishnavism* fought for supremacy. The *Aachaarya,* aware of this conflict, emphatically presents the

magnificent truth that these two are not, in fact, different, but represent only one and the same Truth, in two forms. Temples sprang up at the cessation of fights, across the country with half *Shiva* and half *Vishnu* representated in the same idol, to convey the message that they both signify one and the same Truth. When devotees felt one God concept superior to another, they went in for demonstrations in literature, architecture and ritual forms to glorify their chosen Gods. Another example is *Ardhanaarishvara,* where both the female and the male aspects are blended in one and the same figure. Axe and deer are *Shiva*'s symbols, while the *Conch* and *Chakra* are *Vishnu*'s and the figure with half bodies from *Shiva* and *Vishnu* in one idol, is worshipped as *Shankara (Shiva)* and *Naaraayana (Vishnu*). Those who worship this form would soon realize the reality of non-duality, and the folly of putting faith in multiple Gods, some as superior and others as inferior. This truth was mentioned by the *Aachaarya* even in the opening verse, in which he discussed delusion of Trinity which mars the truth of the non-dual, *Brahman*. The other method mentioned above is practice of *Brahmavidya*, the superior knowledge. By meditating on the primordial *mantra*, *AUM,* one can destroy all the duality of the *Aatman* and *Brahman*, and attain the universality of oneness. One should acquire succinctly the knowledge to reach Truth, which is possible by devotion and absolute dedication to *Brahman*, imagined either with forms or without forms.

The answer is elaborated further in the next verse. The *Aachaarya* now explains that the Almighty is the primordial sound *AUM,* the *Naada Brahamam*.

41. *Thaayangal gitamiva naada prayoga muta-*
Neka shrutinkalorumikkunna pole para-
Mekaaksharatthiladangunnu sarvavumi-
Taakaasha sookshma tanu Naaraayanaaya Namah.

The tunes, the notes and the rythms of music are eternal. All the different tunes in Indian Music are formed from the seven basic

swaras. Music is set to *shruthi* (tune) and the rendering of music with all its orchestra blends with and merges into it. Likewise all sounds, all actions, all thoughts and all deeds blend with the one tone, the primordial *AUM*. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

All *raagas* (tunes) originate from and flow back to *AUM*. Music is set to *Shruthi* and blends with it. The basic *swaras* in oriental music tradition are seven in number, *Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Dha* and *Ni*. All *swaras* originate from the primordial sound, the indestructible and unending *AUM*. Music is born from arranging the *swaras* in different permutations and combinations. Different arrangements generate different *ragas*. Likewise, the phenomenal universe, which presents itself in plurality, is *paramaatma*, the Supreme Soul, itself. Thus diversity is manifestation of one and the same Truth. Truth can be realized only by meditation of the pure and infinite consciousness.

The *Aachaarya* reveals that it is the glory of the Almighty that shines in all beings. He proceeds to illustrate the practice of *yoga* to realize *Parmaatma*.

42. *Dambhaadi doshamutanettum kalanju hridi*
Munpe nijaasana muracheka naadiyute
Kampam kalanju nilayaarum katappatinu
Tumpangal tirkka Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

For realization of God, one should, at the outset, get rid off all the eight complexes of the mind that act as major impediments in the path towards realization of the goal through *Yoga*. O! *Naaraayana*! I salute Thee!

One has to assume an appropriate and convenient posture to practise meditation. There are several *aasanas* (postures) prescribed as appropriate for a *yoga* practioner. One may try and choose one's convenient posture from among them. Once the posture is chosen and it has become well within control, one may

begin the *yoga* practice. The posture would keep *sushumna* in the spinal chord, straight facilitating passage upwards of the life power through the six apertures till it reaches *sahasraara*, the thousand-petalled lotus flower, at which stage one attains realization. *Sushumna* is a canal situated inside the spinal chord, which *yogi*s speak of, through which the spiritual energy passes during the arousal of the *Kundalini* (the life power).

The importance of purity of mind is emphasized for realization of the *Brahman*. Purity of mind comes from destroying the eight *raaga*s (complexes) of the mind: 1). *Mada* (arrogance), 2) *Maatsarya* (rivalry), 3) *Raaga* (complexes or attachments), 4) *Dvesha* (rancour) 5) *Kaama* (lust) 6) *Krodha* (cruelty) 7) *Lobha* (avarice) and 8) *Moha* (greed). These corruptions of the mind, acquired and accumulated in the course of life cycles, have to be warded off before setting to the pursuit of Truth. For this, all thoughts have to be directed to the Almighty and His presence visualized within by the practitioner of meditation. Depending on *vaasana*s one may meditate on God as *saguna* (with attributes) or *nirguna* (without attributes). Meditation makes mind, body and thinking steady; continued practice calms down mind and body, and kindles *Kundalini* situated at the *Moolaadhaara,* the basal end of the spinal chord, which gradually rises and passes through the six nerve centres and reaches the ultimate (*Turiya*) state of peace, tranquillity and knowledge.

For a systematic progress of *saadhana* there are certain preliminaries to be observed. The great *Rishi, Patanjali,* the proponent of the *Yoga Shastra,* systematized the practice under eight steps: *Yama, Niyama, Aasana, Praanaayaama, Pratyaahaara, Dhaarana, Dhyaana*, and *Samaadhi*.

The first step, *Yama,* consists of five components: 1: practising non-injury which includes prevention of injury to anything by thought, word or deed; 2: non–covetousness in thought, word or deed; 3: perfect chastity in thought, word or deed; 4: perfect truthfulness in thought, word or deed; and 5: refusal of gifts. These

precepts are all important and need to be practised at all times by the *saadhaka*.

The second step *Niyama* constitutes observance of personal cleanliness and cultivation of purity of mind, contentment, austerity, study of spiritual scriptures and single-pointed devotion to God. *Aasana*, which comes next, indicates the posture one should assume during meditation. Hips, shoulders and head should be held straight leaving the spine free. The next step is *Praanaayaama*, which means restraining breath. This is intended for controlling *praana* (vital energy) in the system. It is the same energy which controls the movement of everything in the universe and the functioning of physical organs. *Praanaayaama* is not merely the control of breath, but control of *praana*, the energy that vitalizes the body. The fifth step, *Pratyaahaara*, means turning the mind inward and restraining it from going outward. The mind generates an unending flow of unrelated thoughts and creates a chaotic environment over which it dominates. Through *Pratyaahaara* all the scattered thoughts are gathered and systematized. When the mind is in disarray it is difficult to meditatate. There are two forces that act upon the mind of man: one takes it away from its centre, and the other draws it in. Drawing the mind in is *Pratyaahaara*. The sixth step is *Dhaarana*, the concentration of the mind on one spot. If God is the object of meditation, *Dhaarana* is the device to concentration of the mind on God. *Dhaarana* is followed by *Dhyaana* which constitutes the act of meditation. The mind must flow continuously and uninterruptedly during meditation towards the object of meditation. The final step of *Yoga* is S*amaadhi,* which is the super-consciousness state. There are two types of *Samaadhi*, the *Savikalpa Samaadhi* and the *Nirvikalpa Samaadhi*: the former is dense with consciousness of God, at a lower state, while the latter, the absolute and pure consciousness is unqualified *samaadhi*.

Seekers of meditation often complain about wavering thoughts that disturb concentration. They complain of physical discomfort too. They soon accept defeat and quit. The *saadhaka* has to be

steadfast in his pursuit and should have a mind of total surrender to the Almighty.

The *saadhaka* undergoes several special experiences in the course of his transcendental progression through these steps, such as the ones illustrated in the next few verses. .

43. *Dhakkaa mridanga tuti taalangal poleyuta-*
Norkkaamitannilayilennetamorttu mama
Nilkkunnatilla mana maalaana baddha kari-
Teen kanta pole Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

During the progress of life power, *Kundalini*, through the nerve apertures, the *Saadhaka* begins to hear auspicious and dulcet sounds of instrumental music, of Conch, Flute and percussion instruments. At the thought that these *yogic* experiences presage the passage of *Kundalini* to its ultimate effulgence, the *Saadhaka*'s mind gets impatient like an elephant, tied down to a stake, which tries to break loose, at the sight of food beckoning from yonder. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

As meditation progresses the *Kundalini* energy moves from *Moolaadhaara* through the *Sushumna* resulting in splendid experiences of hearing melodious sounds. When the life energy reaches *Anaahata*, the sounds become clearer and ever more melodious. *Shri Shankara* has mentioned about such elaborate orchestra in his hymns of *Dakshinaamoortty* and *Prabodhodayam*. It is stated that a *Yogi* hears eight different types of sounds of instruments, when the vital power reaches *Anaahata*. Such experiences continue all along as the spiritual practice proceeds.

Even if liberation may not take place in this life itself, the *Aachaarya* implores to the Almighty for knowledge and progress gathered through the practice of the ninetysix principles, so that it may help continuing the practice in the succeeding lives until the attainment of full realization.

44. *Naivaaparam parichu karmavyapaaya miha*
Madhye bhavikkilu matallenkilum kimapi
Tatvaadiyil paramudichoru bodhamatu
Chittevarentatiha Naaraayanaaya Namah.

No matter if life departs before attaining Bliss, or not. Whatever awareness of Truth that has dawned in me, should illuminate my mind ever and anon. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

Those who pursue the spiritual path always aspire for the liberation of the soul in this life (*janma*)itself. The *Aachaarya* prays to the Almighty that even if ultimate salvation is not attained in the present life itself, the accumulated wisdom and knowledge already acquired should continue to enlighten his mind. This is a characteristic of an individual who has made considerable progress in spiritual pursuit. At this stage he experiences no concern nor anxiety as he has no definite deadlines to meet. He knows that with the Almighty with him, he could accomplish the goal, here or beyond. At this stage, he does not care about *Karma phala* (reward from action) and behaves as a true *tyaagi* who forsakes all the good and all the bad outcomes of his actions and dedicates them at the holy feet of the Lord. He partakes only of what is essential for his survival as *prasaada* or taste of His pleasure. The accumulated knowledge and spiritual progress would persist and increase because of the grace of the Almighty. However, even after all impediments disappear and purity of body and mind is achieved, liberation may not be attained. Without complete annihilation of all *vaasanas,* both good and bad, ultimate realization of the Truth is impossible. Truth will shine in the mind when all *vaasana*s disappear.

One who achieves liberation of the soul while he is still alive is called a *Jivanmukta*. For reaching this stage one should have the discriminating knowledge of *Aatma* and *Anaatma*. Acquisition of true knowledge and cessation of *karma* is not possible, however, without annihilation of *vaasana*s. With attainment of true

knowledge the whole character of the *saadhaka* metamorphoses and rests at the *jivanmukta* state. All these inevitable changes happen consciously to the *Jnaani*, who is not perturbed the least from his engrossment of the Almighty but experiences Bliss.

Thus the essential meaning of everything is one and the same.

45. *Tatvaartha mittha makhilattinnumonnu bata*
Shabdangal ullil vilasitunna ninnatiyil
Muktikku kaaranamite shabdamennu tava
Vaakyangal tanne Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Everything has the Almighty shining in it in the form of consciousness and awareness. It is the same awareness that dwells within all sounds. All *Veda*s are your pronouncements which themselves declare that the source of salvation is the self-same sounds. Oh! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

The *Veda*s teach us that *Brahman* is the all-pervading *naada* and is known as *Naada Brahman*. *Veda*s expound the truth behind the origin, sustenance and destruction of all life forms. They themselves constitute and also emphasize the presence of the all-pervading effulgence in the form of sound.

Brahman exists in every living creature. Persons with pure consciousness realize the *Brahman* within them. However, *Brahman* as primordial sound *AUM* is understood even by persons less endowed. Pursuit after the origin of sound, leads one to Truth. In *Yoga* practice, the *saadhaka* progresses through several stages of pleasant sounds till at last the *Brahman* manifests in his mediation, may be in the form of *Naada Brahman*. Even modern astronomy concurs with this view. According to the Big Bang theory (which itself fails to explain the cause and preconditions for the Bang), space manifests first. In the Indian philosophy, space and sound are the same as sound is the quality of space only. From the unmanifested sound, refined sound and *Veda*s have evolved. *Rishi*s and Sages understood the primacy of sound as

Naada Brahman. *Mantras* (chantings) are the resources used by *Rishis* to gain concentration in meditation on *Brahman*. All *mantras* are powerful sound forms practised by Sages to attain the Supreme.

The various *Upanishats*, *Shruthis* and *Smritis* extol *pranava* (AUM) as *Brahman*, the chanting of which takes a devotee to realization of the Almighty. *Pranava mantra* transports the Self and elevates It from the perishable body to the non-destructible and eternal *Paramaatma*. Since *Vedas* are expressed through sounds, chanting of the *Vedas* liberates the soul. The four *Vedas* expound the principles *Prajnaanam Brahmam*, *Tatvamasi, Ayam aatmam Brahmam* and *Aham Brahmaasmi* (Knowledge alone is *Brahman*, That Thou Art, This *Aatma* is *Brahman*, Myself is *Brahman)*.

In the next verse, the *Aachaarya* gives further principles of *saadhana* for realization of the Supreme and the reasons for failure.

46. *Thhallinnu mite paramillennumortu muta-*
Nellaarotum kutari vaapeshium sapadi-
Tallippurappetu maham buddhi kontu bata
Kollunnu ni chilare Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Some individuals develop characteristics which make them arrogant, belligerent and boisterous. They even negate the existence of God and assume themselves to be all-powerful and invincible. You destroy them selectively for the betterment of mankind and for restoration of harmony and peace. I beseech you to show me the correct path and to save me from falling into vicious ways. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I prostrate at Your lotus feet!

Ignorance nurtures arrogance which in turn leads to self-aggrandisement, quarrel and hollow talk. The *Aachaarya* prays to the Lord to enlighten him as to why He gives such wicked nature to some people and make them suffer.

Wicked people take advantage of the vulnerable, the hapless and the indigent. They think that no force exists in the Universe stronger than theirs and indulge in misdeeds. They have no inkling that the deprived and the deserted are protected by the Almighty and ultimately saved and that the persecutors will be punished. *Bhagavad Gita* declares this principle in unequivocal terms: *Paritraanaaya saadhoonaam vinaashaayachadushkritaam, Dharmasamsthaapanaarthaaya sambhavaami yuge yuge.* It means: for protection of the virtuous, destruction of the wicked and establishment of righteousness, I manifest myself from aeon to aeon. It is the nature of God as protector, to keep the world going on the lines of righteousness.

Whenever need arises, the Almighty appears to destroy wicked people and protect His devotees. The story of *Prahlaada* and *Hiranyakashipu* illustrates this principle. *Prahlaada,* in spite of all the persecutions at the hands of his father, *Hiranyakashipu,* continued to be an ardent devotee of *Vishnu* and suffered all torments in silence with perseverance and unrelenting faith. Ultimately, the Lord Himself appeared for his rescue.

Of the eight qualities of the mind, *Mada* (Arrogance) is a vice that generates delusions of grandeur and power but ultimately leads to downfall and destruction. The *Aachaarya* requests the Almighty to prevent such an eventuality to him.

47. *Dambhaaya vanmaramatinnullil ninnu chila*
Kompum talirttavadhiyillaata kaaykkanikal
Enperilottarikil vaazhaayvatinnu gati
Nin paada bhakti Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Pride is a giant tree from which sprout branches, tender leaves and countless fruits of vice. The *Aachaarya* prays to the Almighty not to allow such vices to dwell in him. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I pray for Your mercy!

Ego with all its negative qualities grows luxuriantly like a tree. The branches sprout and spread and the tree bears abundance of flowers and fruits. However, all these are the diabolical manifestations of the six self-destructive attributes, obstructing the pursuit of God. The luxuriant growth of the foliage, flowers and fruits is a mirage created by ego. These manifestations of worldly pleasures are momentary and hinder the progress of the *saadhaka* towards Truth. Ego-centricity also comes in the way of cultivating devotion to God. The *Aachaarya,* knowing well about this malaise, prays to the Almighty to safeguard him from perils that emanate from ego. However this is wishful thinking for most people since ego is so powerful and has a devastating grip. Temporal pleasures haunt most mortals preventing them from the pursuit of Truth.

Egoism leads to the development of *taamasic* or dull qualities such as jealousy and greed and to evil words and deeds. *Taamasic* persons fail to realize God; in fact, they progressively get away from God. The *Aachaarya* prays to the Almighty to safeguard his name from any association with such a tree and its fruits. True devotion will sprout only in a pure heart. The ways of ego are to be shunned and purity of mind, love and compassion are to be fostered. The *Aachaarya* prays to God to protect him from mortification of the mind caused by ego.

The ensuing verses deal with further explanation of *Mada* (arrogance) and its deleterious effects on practices for self-realization.

48. *Dhanyohamennu mati manyoha mennu mati*
Punyngal cheyta purushan njaanitennu miti
Onnalla kaankoru kotumkaatu danti maya
Monnichu kootiyatu Naaraayanaaya Namah

Arrogance has grown into a large and thick forest consisting of millions of poisonous trees and infested by wild animals such as elephants. Each tree represents some boastfulness or other: I am

wealthy; I am respectable; I am a sacred person who has performed great acts of charity; and so on. See how these boasts have grown into an entire forest of self-deception. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I prostrate before you!

Dambham (vainglory) stalls progress towards realization of God. It creates an impenetrable forest around the individual. Such individuals take pride in themselves as pious, respectable, noble and holy. They consider themselves the most spiritually advanced and all others inferior to them. Their exaggerated notions about their worthiness thus create a wood within them consisting of luxuriant trees of poison alluded to in the previous verse. Most of us cultivate and maintain such mini-woods in our hearts. The possibility of any spiritual advancement for a person depends on his success to fell and destroy such vicious growth within him. Like other evil states, vainglory also is the result of ignorance and misapprehension. In *Gita*, Lord *Krishna* explained the characteristics of the wicked and forewarned them of the disastrous consequences that would follow. The Lord cautioned them not to pursue the path of pleasure and pride lest they should plunge in unfathomable depths of sin.

In the next verse the *Aachaarya* emphasizes the necessity to burn down this forest with the fire of *Jnaana* (knowledge) and direct the mind away from such desires and bad traits.

49. *Nannaay gatikkoru sahasraara dhaarayila-*
Tanneettil nin karuna vanmaari peytu punah
Munnam mulacha mula bhaktikku vaazhtuvatu-
Minne kripaanilaya Naaraayanaaya Namah.

For attaining redemption from these bondages, the woods of self-aggrandisement have to be burnt down in the fire of meditation and doused in the heavy down-pour of Your Mercy. With your support, Oh! My Lord, the All-Merciful, the seeds of devotion that had sprouted will grow fast if the ashes of self-aggrandisement are given to the seedlings as manure. Oh! Lord *Naaraayana*! I salute You!

Divinity is the basic nature of humans; continuous practice of vainglory, deceit and depravity takes man away from his basic nature. Still it is possible to burn down all these acquired evil traits which mask the real self. By acquiring the fire of knowledge through spiritual practice, this thick forest of ego can be burnt down. The resulting ashes may be used to nurture the growth of devotion. The seed of devotion is present in every individual, but remains dormant due to the predominance of evil. The presence of devotion itself gets forgotten due to overwhelming interest in worldly pleasures and the fostering of evil traits. The *Aachaarya* earnestly prays to the Almighty to water the seeds of devotion sprouted in the ashes of the forest of egoism and self-deception.

We have moved away from the Self and sought bodily pleasures and material propserity as our ultimate goal. These pleasures, though only momentary, pull us down along the alley of pain and sorrow. Superimposition of overwhelming *taamasic* qualities conceals the essential divinity of human nature. *Saadhanas* such as *Shravana*, *Manana* and *Nidhidhyaasana* would take the devotee to the pinnacle of self-realization, the thousand-petalled lotus flower located at the top of the spinal chord on the brain. At this stage, the nectar of enlightenment rains down and nurtures the seedling of devotion already in sprout. Here the *Aachaarya* prays for the *jnaanaagni* (the fire of knowledge) to burn down all bad qualities and for the rain of enlightenment to shower on the seedling of devotion.

The *Aachaarya* turns in the next verse to another important aspect of God-realization, the full utilization of time for chanting His name for attainment of salvation.

50. *Palatum paranju pakal kalayunna naavu tava*
Tirunaama kirtana mitatinaay varenamiha
Kalayaayka kaalamitilatukondu moksha gati
Elutennu kelppu Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah

Most individuals waste time in glib talk. Time should be utilized for realization of the Almighty by praising Him and meditating on His greatness. In this *Kali Yuga, Kirtana* (chanting of the names of the Lord) is the surest way to self-realisation. Oh! Lord! Almighty! I bow before Thee!

Half our life time is spent in sleep; other activities such as eating, drinking, working and playing take away most of our waking hours. Only very little time is left after all these activities. The majority waste this limited time on gossiping and tale-bearing. Had this wasted time been spent on chanting the Lord's names, it would have fetched salvation. The *Aachaarya* therefore advises all man to utilize their time on chanting the names of the Lord. This is a great advantage of our times, the *Kali Yuga*. In earlier *Yuga*s God-realization required much greater and more arduous efforts and rituals. In *Kali Yuga, Dharma* has waned; yet God realization has become simple and straight. Unfortunately, people in *Kali Yuga* are vicious, lethargic, morbid and short-lived. They are the least concerned about the upholding of *Dharma*. The *Aachaarya* wishes that they spend some of their time on prayer and meditation.

In the next verse the *Aachaarya* insists on obtaining knowledge instead of wasting precious time of this worldly life on futile pursuits and physical pleasures.

\# 51. *Phalamillayaate mama vashamaakkola jagati*
Malamootramaaya tati palanaaliruttiyutan
Alavillayaate velivakameyudippatinu
Kalayaate kalamiha Naaraayanaaya Namah

A long worldly life in this dirty body filled with faeces and urine is hell; Without wasting time on carnal pleasures and pain, efforts should be made to attainment of enlightenment, which is boundless and infinite. Oh! My Lord! I prostrate before You!

The human body, to which we are all enamoured, is filthy and

foul. Attachment to this body and its pleasures deters realization by weakening the yearning for Truth and Bliss. The body is made up of flesh, fat, bone, secretions, bone-marrow, blood and semen; attachment to it detracts a person from the path towards realization. However, even though this body is a dirty bundle and is a source of all sorrow, it can be used with proper control for attaining salvation. It can be made the temple of God with correct understanding and practice.

The *Aachaarya* goes on to point out the foibles of man to worldly pleasures and the grave consequences that follow.

52. *Bandhukkalartha griha putraadi janmamatil*
Varddhichu ninnulakil nin tatva morkilu mi-
Tandhannu kaattiyoru kannaatipole puna-
Rennaakkolaa Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

For a person seeking only worldly possessions such as relatives, riches, house and progeny, thoughts of Your divine principles are of no avail. They would prove as futile as showing mirror to the blind. I pray, My Lord! do not make my life in this world worthless by nurturing weakness for temporal gratifications. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayaana*! I prosrate before Thee!

Although *Brahman* is universally present, man forgets its presence due to attachment to the body, material wealth and kinsfolk. At birth, man brings to the world only the body and the supreme consciousness that dwells within. Over time he develops attachments to worldly possessions and relations and grows increasingly selfish and possessive. He hankers after wealth and fame, carnal pleasures and friends and relatives. Indulgence in worldly pleasures takes a person increasingly away from divine principles and the path towards Deliverance. The Lord within him recedes and he loses sight of Him. Reminding him of God is as useless as holding a mirror to a blind man. Attachment to the world casts a curtain before the light of *Brahman* immanent in man.

This bondage is to be broken and attachment to the Almighty is to be restored. The *Aachaarya* expounds this truth emphatically with convincing examples.In the next verse the *Aachaarya* forewarns that death is inevitable and that it may arrive at any time.

53. *Bhakshippatinnu guha pole pilarnnu mukha-*
Mayyo kritaantaniha pinpe natannu mama
Ethunnu dardura murattote pinpe yoru
Sarpam kanakke Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

In his frantic pursuit of worldly possessions, man seldom realises that death is close at his heels with open jaws as wide as the mouth of a cave, to devour him. It is like the serpant vigorously chasing the frog that craves for food. Death is certain, but the time the place and the manner in which it strikes is uncertain. Yet man does not find time to stay back and reflect. Oh! Lord *Naaraayana*! My humble salutations to You!

Cultivating devotion to God and practising austerities for realization of the Truth are not easy. One has to follow strict *saadhana* or austerities mentioned in the scriptures which include the four major *saadhanas*, (the *Saadhana Chatushtayam*) *aatma—anaatma vivechanam* (the discrimination of *aatma* and *anaatma)*, *karmaphala tyaagam* (selfless service), *shad sampat* (the six great desirable possessions) and *mumukshutvam* (intense yearning for liberation). Lure of material pleasures deprives a person of all chances to Realization.

Whatever material wealth is acquired is transient and perishable. Death makes all possession meaningless and unreal. Even the human body has to be shed on death. Only Self is real and immortal. But in the frenzy of accumulating wealth, power and prestige, man turns out his divine light and gropes in the dark, as it were. Acquisitions and acquisitiveness are to be shunned. The Self within has to be recognized and realized, because it is the greatest and the only one there is, as *Bhagavad Gita* has clearly stated.

Avinaashi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idam tatham
Vinaasham avyayasya sya na kaschit kartumarhati
(*Bhagavad Gita*. 2:17)

Know thou THAT which pervades all is immutable indestructible and eternal. Once the Self is understood there is nothing else to understand; death cannot touch IT nor can time and space diminish IT.

The *Aachaarya* prays to the Almighty in the next verse to forgive him for all his thoughts, words and deeds done since birth in this world – in the past, in the present and would be done in future - and to accept them all with pleasure.

\# 54. *Manninkal vanniha pirannannutottu puna-*
Rentonnu vaang manasu kaayangal cheytatum
Enthinni melilatu mellam ninakku hridi
Santhoshamaay varika Naaraayanaaya Namah

Here, the *Aachaarya* suggests a way to salvation even for persons who have committed sins ever since birth in this life. Place all actions and all the rewards at the lotus feet of the *Brahman*. Take only what is essential as *prasaada*. All human failings such as pride, greed, rivalry and envy would thereby vanish and the Lord may forgive for all the errors and evils committed and are likely to be committed. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I pray for Your Grace!

All our actions lead to two different types of results: one which facilitates Self-realization through enhancement of knowledge and awakening of consciousness and the other which leads further on to worldly attractions. But man cannot shun action. Action, (dynamism), is the nature of all life. Action without attraction, deed which seeks no reward, is, therefore, the path to pursue. This is the path of *Karma Yoga*. Lord *Krishna* has ordained thus:

Karmanye vaadhikaaraste, maa phaleshu kadaachana,
maa karmaphalahetur bhur maa te sangostuakarmani
(*Bhagavad Gita* 2:47)

You have only the right for action and not at all any claim to its fruits; let not the fruits of action be your motive; nor let there be in you any attachment to action. Once the duty is performed, leave the rest to the Lord. A duty done well is its own reward. It ennobles the heart and takes the doer nearer to God. Actions undertaken for self-aggrandisement and acquisition of worldly pleasures is not *dharma;* it take the doer down the alleys of *Maaya* and ungodliness. Direct therefore your ways towards God.

The *Aachaarya* tells in the next verse that the best and the noblest way to Him is experiencing Him in each and all, the way of Absolute Oneness.

55. *Yaatonnu kaanmatatu Naaraayana pratima*
Yaatonnu kelppatatu Naaraayana shrutikal
Yaatonnu cheyvatatu Naaraayanaarchnakal
Yaatonnatokke Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

All that is seen is *Naaraayana* form; all that is heard is *Naaraayana* praise; all that is performed is *Naaraayana* offering; All that is, is *Naaraayana*. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! My Salutations to You!

In this verse, the *Aachaarya* reemphasises the ultimate Truth, that nothing exists other than Him, the *Brahman* whether it be seeing, hearing or doing. This level of perception marks the zenith of non-dual wisdom. For an ordinary mind, perceptions undergo continous change under the influence of fleeting sights, words and deeds and they remain always turbulent. For calmness, composure and peace of mind, it is necessary to realize that all that happens is Him in sport.

The cause of the universe rests on the causeless *Brahman*. The effects of a cause cannot be different in nature from the cause itself. All ornaments made of gold are also gold although they look different in form. Similarly the *Parmaatma* who is the cause of the universe is itself the *aatma* that dwells in all His creations.

Realisation of Non-duality cessates the illusion of plurality and reveals *Brahman*. Practising of the three major non-dual principles, namely, *Bhaavaadvaita, Kriyaadvaita* and *Dravyaadvaita*, based on action-oriented non-duality is illustrated in this verse.

In the next verse the *Aachaarya* explains, how one may meditate on the Almighty in the form of *Vishnu.*

\# 56. *Ravikoti tulya moru chakram karattiliha*
Phaniraaja neppozhu mirippaan kitappatinum
Aniyunnatokke vanamaalaadi kaustubhavu-
Makame bhavippatinu Naaraayanaaya Namah

Sudarshana Chakram with brighteness of a million blazing suns in hand, the Great *Ananta* for reclining and garlands and sandal paste for adornment, Lord Almighty, I beseech You to manifest in my mind. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I prostrate before Thee!

In the previous verse the *Aachaarya* saw *Naaraayana* in everything. Now he seeks Him in all His glory inside him. This is a higher stage: an ascent from *Vijnaana* to *Jnaana*. Meditation enhances *Satva Bhaava* and leads to higher knowledge and ultimately to Truth. From the initial training stage to this stage of accomplishment one needs to pass through various intermediary stages. Truth cannot be meditated all at once by a novice in spiritual pursuit since it is not conceivable to an ordinary mind. *Saguna Brahman* or God with attributes is what is prescribed for the beginner, to meditate upon. In the scriptures such as the *Upanishats*, the evolution of a *Saadhaka* from the stage of conceptualisation of God with attributes to the stage of understanding Him as Non-dual reality, the principle of THAT THOU ART through several intermediary stages has been graphically illustrated.

The *Aachaarya* proceeds to explain how the Universe originates, flourishes and vanishes in the *Brahman*, through *Maaya*.

\# 57. *Laksham prakaaramotu srishtippatinnu matu*
Rakshippatinnu matu sikshippatinnu miha
Vikshepamaavaranamirantu saktikala-
Tinkennudichu Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

The primordial boundless energy and idea creates, maintains, destroys and recreates this universe of plethoric diversity in an unending process through the twin forces of *Maaya,* known as *aavarana* (concealment) of reality from things and *vikshepa* (projection) of attributes to things. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I bow before Thee!

The super-conscious nature of the universal self creates objects with name and form through *Maaya.* The *Aavarana* and the *Vikshepa* powers and the illusions they produce, all emanate from *Brahman* but conceal and misrepresent *Brahman. Aavarana* conceals *Brahman;* after concealment, *Maaya* creates illusions of shapes, forms and qualities to the universe and its contents, dynamic and static, in the wise of a magician who produces illusions of various kinds. The illusions of **snake in the rope** and **ghost in the post** are examples alluded in the scriptures. When the light of Truth dawns, all illusion vanishes like mist in sunlight, *Brahman* revealing itself in its unblemished effulgence.

In the next verse the *Aachaarya* explains how *Maaya* and its projections could be destroyed through meditation on the *Viraat roopa* or the universal form of *Brahman.*

\# 58. *Vadanam namukku sikhi vasanagal sandhyakalu-*
Mudaram namukkudadhi ulakezhu rantumiha
Bhavanam namukku shivanetrangal raatri pakal
Akame bhavippatinu Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Imagine the *Saadhaka* and the *Brahman* are the same with Fire as face, the three *Sandhyas* (dawn, noon and dusk) as costumes, the vast oceans as belly, the fourteen worlds as abode and the day (the sun) and the night (the moon) as eyes. Let this imagination fill

all your being. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! My humble salutation to You!

Although the meditation upon the primordial form of the *Brahman*, the un-manifested *Hiranya Garbha* was expounded in the sixteenth verse, it is presented here in a descriptive form. The worshipper and the worshipped, the devotee and the deity, the field and the player are, and are realized to be, one and the same. The *Saadhaka* meditates upon the *Brahman*, in *Viraat Purusha* form with face, belly and eyes and clothed in glorious garments in His Castle. The devotee and the deity cease to exist, the diverse aspects of the universe disappear, and all that remains is THAT and THAT alone.

In *Gita*, Lord *Krishna* has told this truth in unequivocal terms: .

> *Iti kshetram tathaa jnaanam jneyam choktam samastah*
> *Madbhakta etad vijnaya madbhaavayopapadyate*
> (*Bhagavad Gita* 13:18)

Thus the person, the knowledge, the object of knowledge and all that is ever spoken – all is My manifestation. He tells *Arjuna* that the person who knows and the person that he knows are the same; it is the same which is manifested as matter and space.

> *Kshetrakshetrajnayor evam antaram jnaana chakshusa*
> *Bhoota prakritimoksham cha ye vidur yanti te param*
> *(Gita 13:34)*

Distinction between the knower and the known disappears with knowledge; the plurality of matter, mind and space also vanishes. The devotee turns *Brahman*, and there exists nothing else.

This *Viraat Roopa Upaasana* (meditation on the Universe form of God) is no doubt magnificent and cultivates empathy with everything. Every conceivable object in the world is understood to be part of His body. This truth was revealed to *Yashoda* (His

mother) and *Arjuna* (His disciple) by Lord *Krishna*. Both were dazzled and dumbfounded and could not stand the daze; they prayed to Him to resume His human form.

The *Aachaarya* prays in the next verse to the Almighty to take care of all devotees, although they choose different paths due to differences in ability and character and aptitudes.

59. Shaktikku takka vazhiyittham bhajippavane
Bhaktyaavideha dridha vishwaasamotu matha
Bhaktyaakatannu tava trikkaal pitippatina-
Yakkunnatennu Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

For a devotee who meditates on you, according to his ability, in one of these ways, when does the day of Deliverence come? When do you, My Lord, propose to cast away his body-centred pride and send him to your lotus feet? Oh! Lord Almighty! I prostrate before You!

Seekers with single-pointed-devotion aspire to reach the Almighty and serve Him ever and anon. They spruce their ears to receive the call and command of the Almighty. And the call does come ultimately when the devotee merges with the Almighty and attains *Brahmaatmaykyam* (the union of the individual Self with the Universal Self). This ultimate goal can be reached through different paths; none is easier than or superior to another. All of them - dualism, qualified dualism, non-dualism and monism - lead to Realization. Each individual, based on his qualities (*vaasanas*), has to take up the path appropriate to him and pursue it steadfastedly. These paths, seemingly unrelated mutually though, are resting places for the pilgrim on his lonely trek to ultimate destination. *Ezhuttachan* is versatile with all the various paths; his descriptions, explanations and reasoning emanate from personal experience, not from unverified scholarship, memorizing scriptures or performing rites and rituals.

The *Aachaarya* explained earlier (in verse #23) that by intensifying

devotion it is possible to experience the Lord increasingly close and clear till at last the experience culminates in union with the Almighty. In *Gita* Lord *Krishna* spoke to Arjuna thus:

Bhaktyaamaam abhijaanaati yavan yaschaasmi tattvatah,
Tato maam tattvato jnatva visate tadanantaram
(*Bhagavad Gita* 18:55)

Through devotion, the *Bhakta* comes to know Me, My vastness and My nature. I am the truth; the instant he realizes me to be the Truth, he enters Me. The devotee becomes one with the Lord. To become *Brahman* is to love God, to know God and to become one with God.

In the next verse the *Aachaarya* requests the Almighty not to allow the devotee's mind to become the playground of the six enemies of virtue; instead, the Lord Himself should take his seat in mind.

60. *Shadvairikalkku vilaayattattinaakkarutu*
Chittaambujam hi tava aastthaana rangamatu
Tatraapi nityavumorikkalirunnarulka
Chittambuje mama cha Naaraayanaaya Namah.

I pray to you my Lord, not to allow in this seat of yours the wanton roaming of the six predators, the arch-enemies of virtue, devotion and spirituality. I am sure Your presence would drive all these vices away. Kindly live in my heart, Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I beseech Your mercy!

Make this humble heart of mineYour cherished abode, lest it should be taken over by the arch enemies of virtue. There are six of them threatening to usurp the abode for You, and make it their hunting ground. They are powerful and without You with me, I could never banish them. These enemies are *kaama* (lust), *krodha* (cruelty), *lobha* (avarice), *moha* (greed), *mada* (arrogance) and *maatsarya* (rivalry). Hence it is practically impossible for an

ordinary person to pursue the Lord with a heart ridden by foul forces. Lord Krishna explained to *Arjuna* this Truth in the *Gita*, in the following words:

> *Dhyaayato vishayaan pumsaah,sangasteshu pajaayate*
> *Sangaat sanjayate kaamah, kaamaat krodhobhi jaayate*
> (*Bhagavad Gita* 2:62)

When a person sets his mind on material objects, sense attachment is produced. From attachment springs desire and from desire comes anger. Desires may prove to be as irresistable as the most powerful attack from forces without. Desires may hurl a person into misery and disgrace. The Lord continues:

> *Krodhaat bhavati sammoha, sammohaat smriti vibhramah*
> *Smritibhramsaat buddhi naaso, buddhinaasaat pranasyati*
> (*Bhagavad Gita* 2:63)

From anger arises infatuation, from infatuation follows confusion, confusion leads to loss of discretion and loss of discretion results in total disaster. One vileness leads to another until at last, they take a person to perdition.

Material pleasures whet the appetite for further pleasures. Unfulfilled desires arouse resentment, anger and hatred. Fulfilment of desires does not set the mind at peace either. Not only does the mind crave for more passions of possessiveness, craziness for power grows wild. The mind loses the faculty to discriminate between good and bad. The person ceases to be human, and loses sight of his Self. The forces of evil reign supreme till he succumbs to them in total defeat.

It is essential therefore to cast away all attachment and prostrate before the Lord.

61. *Satyam vadaami mama bhrityaadi vargamatu-*
Martham kalatra griha putraadi jaalamatum

Okke tadarppana mataakkittu njaanu miha
Trikkaalkal vinu Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Let me therefore tell the truth. I dedicate all my worldly possessions - servants, wealth and family – and myself too at your lotus feet. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I prostrate before You!

Once the realization comes that nothing other than *Brahman* exists, everything else vanishes. Till then, man is plagued by illusions of I-ness and My-ness. Knowledge clears the self of all mists of illusion – narrow-mindedness, selfishness, desires and all the six enemies of the self. These enemies can be destroyed by *saadhana* or spiritual practices. However, to reach this state one has to surmount several hurdles and barriers. The pilgrimage can be made facile if one follows prescribed routes that include *Bhakti* (prayer, meditation, service and surrender).

Bhagavad Gita speaks of this Truth in the following words:

Sarvadharmaan parityajya maam ekam sharanam vraja
Aham tva sarva papebhyo mokshayishyaami maashuchah.
(Bhagavad Gita 18:66)

Don't you grieve. Cast away all your action and seek refuge in Me. I shall redeem you of all your sins.

We have to yield to His pleasure and surrender to His will and take shelter in His love. If we destroy pride in our prowess and repose total faith in God, He will save us. God asks of us total surrender and promises all protection in return. If we are to realize our Self, we must become guileless. When we turn to Him in full faith and innocence, He takes over. God demands surrender of everything, including the performance of your duty. Once everything is surrendered, there exists no you and Him; all is one, the all-pervading *Brahman*.

In the next verse, the *Aachaarya* prays to the Almighty to shine in his life in the form of Enlightenment.

62. *Haranum virinchanu mitamaraadhi naayakanu-*
Mariyunnatilla tava marimaaya tan mahima
Arivaay mutal karaliloru pole ninnarulum
Para, jivanil telika Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Neither the gods, nor the lord of the gods, not even *Brahma* (the creator) and *Shiva* (the retriever) know of the power of the illusions You create. Since the dawn of knowledge, You shine unswerved and undiminished. I beseech your indulgence to shine in my life too. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana!* My humble salutations to You!

Self-realization through knowledge is the supreme way to spirituality. True knowledge is not achievable even by gods, since your *Maaya* is all-powerful and impenetrable. Not even *Shiva, Brahma* and *Indra* were able to discern the Truth remaining under the thick shroud of *Maaya*. Yet, you have always existed in the form of pure knowledge. Only prayer can ignite the light of knowledge lying concealed in the heart. The *Aachaarya* prays to the Almighty to lift *jivaatma* to its natural splendour and purity, the *Paramaatma,* from morass, ignorance and impermanence. This state of existence lies beyond qualities namely, *Satva, Rajas* and *Tamas*. The *Vedas* present this truth in the following prayer:

Asato ma Sat gamaya
Tamaso ma Jyotir gamaya
Mrityor ma Amritam gamaya

Oh! My Lord! lead me from unreal to real, from darkness to light and from mortality to immortality.

The fact that continuous thought and meditation on the *jivaatma* or self is the ideal way of acquiring self-knowledge leading to blissful *Samaadhi,* is explained in the next verse.

63. *Latvam kalarnnitu lakaarattina pparicu*
Tatvam ninakkiloru divyatva muntu tava

Kattunna ponmani vilakkennapole hridi
Nilkkunna naatha Hari Naaraayanaaya Namah.

Like *la* (as in purple) acquiring also the accent *la* (as in land), *Paramaatma* has acquired the character of *jeevaatma*. In fact, neither has *la* changed nor has *Paramaatma*. You dwell in me as a burning lamp of gold and gems. Oh! My Lord! *Naaraayana*! I salute you!

In Sanskrit language, the letter *la* assumes two sounds, depending upon the context. Expressed in speaking differently though, the letter itself remains unchanged. In the same way, *Paramaatma* (*Brahman*) comes to be called *jeevaatma*, without making any change to *Paramaatma*. Thus *Jivaatma* and *Paramaatma* are one and the same; the difference perceived is illusory. It is the Almighty which shines as *Jivaatma* in the human heart. In *Gita*, this point is told by *Krishna* thus:

Yathaadipo nivaatastho, nengate so pama smritah
Yogino yatachittasya yunjato yoga maatmanah
(Bhagavad Gita 6: 19)

As a lamp in a windless place does not flicker, the *Yogi*'s mind, rid of all fleeting thoughts, remains unperturbed in union with the Lord.

Ezhuttachan now reaches the point of fulfillment and prays to the Lord, the *Pranava* (the primordial AUM), the *Naadabrahma*, to impart to him the supreme knowledge.

64. *Kshariyaatorakshara matinkennudichitu*
Lipi yezhu makshara mitennangurappu janam
Ariyaavatalla tava paramaaksharasya porul
Ariyaaru may varika Naaraayanaaya Namah

From the imperishable and indestructible *Brahman* originated the seven-lettered *Akshara* (*Naa raa ya naa ya Na mah*). The essence of this *Akshara* is beyond comprehension. I pray to the

Almighty to render the meaning to this humble devotee. Oh! My Lord! *Naarauyana*! I prostrate before You!

From the *Paramaatma*, the *Naadabrahma*, *AUM*, the Universal Self which is everlasting, originated the seven-lettered *mantra*, *Narayanaya Namah*, the significance and essence of which is not comprehensible to any one, not even gods. If it is to be known, at least in part, your mercy is indispensable. Once you propose, all meaning manifests before a devotee. The *Aachaarya* prays for the Mercy of the Lord.

V. Thanksgiving to *Guru*

Having completed the work, the *Aachaarya* places it at the feet of his kind-hearted *Guru* for scrutiny, correction and approval. In the next verse, he makes this prayer. The *Aachaarya* hopes that the work would prove a canoe to negotiate the ocean of misery and suffering for the entire humanity. Oh! Lord *Naaraayana*! I bow before You!

65. *Karunaapayodhi mama gurunaathani stutiye*
Viravotu paarttu pizha vazhipole tirttarulka
Duritaabdhi tan natuvil mariyunnavarkku para
Moru potamay varika Naaraayanaya Namah

The *Aachaarya* requests his *Guru*, *Nilakantha Somayaaji* to correct all the mistakes and misinterpretations that might have crept in these verses due to its composer's limitations – inadequate knowledge and wisdom. He hopes that this composition would help all those who undergo the agonies of human existence. Let *Hari-namma-kirtanam* prove a canoe to cross the rough seas of worldly attachments and bondages.

The *Aachaarya* seeks the grace of his *Guru* and the Almighty, both being essentially the same, not for his own sake, but for the sake of all humanity. Compassion for fellow-beings, implicit faith in his *Guru* and absolute surrender before the Almighty mark the

Aachaarya from ordinary mortals. *Guru* is considered in all Hindu scriptures as God Himself.

VI *Phala Shruti* (The Call and the Promise of Result)

In the final verse the *Aachaarya* makes mention of the rewards the practice of the principles envisaged in the songs of *Hari*, the *Harinaamakirtanam*, would bring. This statement of potential results is known as *phala shruti*. Salutations to Almighty Naaraayana!

66. *Mada matsaraadikal manassil todaate dina-*
Mitukontu vaazhttuka namukkum gatikku vazhi
Itukelkka taanitoru mozhy taan padhippavanum
Patiyaa bhavaambudhiyil Naaraayanaaya Nama

By careful study, meditation and contemplation of these verses, the devotee is sure to get transformed into a realized self and released from the cycle of birth and death and rebirth. By the mere recitation of these verses, the impediments, such as boastfulness and rivalry, in the path of spirituality and its progress, would be destroyed. He would never again fall into the depths of mortality. The Almighty, *Naaraayana*, would shower His Grace for all times.

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Thus *Harinaamakirtanam*, the true *Upanishat* that expounds the knowledge of the *Brahman*, comes to a close. May there be Peace in all minds and at all times; may the grace of the Almighty shower always on all in the world. I prostrate before the *Aachaarya* and the Almighty.

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ANNEXURE - A-I
HARINAAM KIRTANAM IN *MALAYAALAM* SCRIPT

1. ഓംകാരമായ പൊരുൾ മൂന്നായ് പിരിഞ്ഞുടനെ-
യാങ്കാരമായതിനു താൻതന്നെ സാക്ഷി, യതു
ബോധം വരുത്തുവതിനാളായി നിന്ന പര-
മാചാര്യരൂപ ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

2. ഒന്നായ നിന്നെയിഹ രണ്ടെന്നു കണ്ടളവി-
ലുണ്ടായൊരിണ്ടൽ ബത മിണ്ടാവതല്ല മമ
പണ്ടേക്കണക്കെ വരുവാൻ നിൻകൃപാവലിക-
ളുണ്ടാകയെങ്കലിഹ നാരായണായ നമ:

3. ആനന്ദചിന്മയ ഹരേ ഗോപികാരമണ
ഞാനെന്ന ഭാവമതു തോന്നായ്കവേണമിഹ
തോന്നുന്നതാകിലഖിലം ഞാനിതെന്ന വഴി
തോന്നേണമേ വരദ നാരായണായ നമ:

4. അർക്കാനലാദിവെളിവൊക്കെ ഗ്രഹിക്കുമൊരു
കണ്ണിന്നു കണ്ണു മനമാകുന്ന കണ്ണതിനു
കണ്ണായിരുന്ന പൊരുൾ താനെന്നുറയ്ക്കുമള-
വാനന്ദമെന്തു! ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

5. ഹരിനാമകീർത്തനമിതുരചെയ്‌വതിന്നു ഗുരു-
വരുളാലെ ദേവകളുമരുൾചെയ്ക ഭൂസുരരും
നരനായ് ജനിച്ചു ഭുവി മരണം ഭവിപ്പളവു-
മുരചെയ്‌വതിന്നരുൾക നാരായണായ നമ:

6. ശ്രീമൂലമായ പ്രകൃതീങ്കൽത്തുടങ്ങി ജന-
നാന്ത്യത്തൊളം പരമഹാമായതൻെറ ഗതി
ജന്മങ്ങളും പല കഴിഞ്ഞാലുമില്ലവധി
കർമ്മത്തിനും പരമ നാരായണായ നമ:

7. ഗർഭസ്ഥനായ് ഭുവി ജനിച്ചും മരിച്ചുമുദ-
കപ്പോളപോലെ, ജനനാന്ത്യേ ന നിത്യഗതി
ത്വദ്ഭക്തിവർദ്ധനമുദിക്കേണമെൻ മനസി
നിത്യം തൊഴായ്‌വരിക നാരായണായ നമ:

8. ണത്താരിൽ മാനിനിമണാളൻ പുരാണപുരു-
ഷൻ ഭക്തവത്സലനനന്താദിഹീനനപി
ചിത്തത്തിലച്യുത കളിപ്പന്തലിട്ടു വിള-
യാടീടുകെന്മനസി നാരായണായ നമ:

9. പച്ചക്കിളിപ്പവിഴപാൽവർണ്ണമൊത്ത നിറ-
മിച്ഛിപ്പവർക്കു ഷഡാധാരം കടന്നുപരി
വിശ്വസ്ഥിതിപ്രളയസൃഷ്ടിക്കു സത്ത്വരജ-
സ്തമോഭേദരൂപ ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

10. തത്ത്വത്തിനുള്ളിലുദയം ചെയ്തിടുന്ന പൊരു-
ളെത്തീടുവാൻ ഗുരുപദാന്തേ ഭജിപ്പവനു
മുക്തിക്കു തക്കൊരുപദേശം തരും, ജനന-
മറ്റീടുമന്നവനു നാരായണായ നമ:

11. എൻപാപമൊക്കെയറിവാൻ ചിത്രഗുപ്തനുടെ
സമ്പൂർണ്ണലിഖ്യതഗിരം കേട്ടു ധർമ്മപതി
എൻപക്കലുള്ള ദുരിതം പാർത്തുകാണുമള-
വംഭോരുഹാക്ഷ തുണ നാരാണായ നമ:

12. നക്ഷത്രപങ്ക്തികളുമിന്ദുപ്രകാശവു-
മൊളിക്കും ദിവാകരനുദിച്ചങ്ങുയർന്നളവ്,
പക്ഷീഗണം ഗരുഡനെക്കണ്ടു കൈതൊഴുതു
രക്ഷിക്കയെന്നടിമ നാരായണായ നമ:

13. മത്പ്രാണനും പരനുമൊന്നെന്നുറപ്പവനു
തത്പ്രാണദേഹവുമനിത്യം കളത്രധനം
സ്വപ്നാദിയിൽ പലതു കണ്ടിട്ടുണർന്നവനൊ-
ടൊപ്പം ഗ്രഹിക്ക ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

14. അൻപേണമെൻമനസി ശ്രീനീലകണ്ഠഗുരു-
വംഭോരുഹാക്ഷമിതി വാഴ്ത്തുന്നതിന്നുമിഹ,
അൻപത്തൊരക്ഷരവുമോരോന്നിതെൻമൊഴിയി-
ലമ്പോടു ചേർക്ക ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

15. ആദ്യാക്ഷരത്തിലുളവായോന്നിതൊക്കെയു, മി-
താദ്യാക്ഷരത്തിലിതടങ്ങുന്നതും കരുതി,
ആദ്യാക്ഷരാലിവയിലോരോന്നെടുത്തു പരി-
കീർത്തിപ്പതിന്നരുൾക നാരായണായ നമ:

16. ഇക്കണ്ട വിശ്വമതുമിന്ദ്രാദിദേവകളു-
മർക്കേന്ദുവഹ്നികളൊടൊപ്പം ത്രിമൂർത്തികളും
അഗ്രേ വിരാട്പുരുഷ നിന്മൂലമക്ഷരവു-
മോർക്കായ് വരേണമിഹ നാരായണായ നമ:

17. ഈ വന്ന മോഹമകലെപ്പോവതിന്നു പുന-
രീവണ്ണമുള്ളൊരുപദേശങ്ങളില്ലുലകിൽ
ജീവന്നു, കൃഷ്ണ ഹരി ഗോവിന്ദ രാമ തിരു-
നാമങ്ങളൊന്നൊഴികെ നാരായണായ നമ:

18. ഉള്ളിൽക്കനത്ത മദമാത്സര്യമെന്നിവക-
ളുള്ളോരു കാലമുടനെന്നാകിലും മനസി
ചൊല്ലുന്നതാരു തിരുനാമങ്ങളന്നവനു
നല്ലൂ ഗതിക്കു വഴി നാരായണായ നമ:

19. ഊരിന്നു വേണ്ട ചില ഭാരങ്ങൾ വേണ്ടതിനു
നീരിന്നു വേണ്ട നിജദാരങ്ങൾ വേണ്ടതിനു
നാരായണാച്യുത ഹരേ യെന്നതിന്നൊരുവർ
നാവൊന്നേ വേണ്ടു ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

20. ഋതുവായ പെണ്ണിനുമിരപ്പവനും ദാഹകനും
പതിതന്നുമഗ്നിയജ്ഞനം ചെയ്ത ഭൂസുരനും
ഹരിനാമകീർത്തനമിതൊരുനാളുമാർക്കുമുട-
നരുതാത്തതല്ല ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

21. ൠഭോഷനെന്നു ചിലർ ഭാഷിക്കിലും ചിലർക-
ളിപ്പാപിയെന്നു പറയുന്നാകിലും മനസി
ആവോ നമുക്കു തിരിയായെന്നുറച്ചു തിരു-
നാമങ്ങൾ ചൊല്ക ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

22. ഌതഢ്മാദി ചേർത്തൊരു പൊരുത്തം നിനയ്ക്കിലുമി-
തജിതൻെറ നാമഗുണമതിനിങ്ങു വേണ്ടൂ ദൃഢം
ഒരു കോടികോടി തവ തിരുനാമമുള്ളവയി-
ലരുതാത്തതില്ല ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

23. ൡകാരമാദി മുതലായിട്ടു ഞാനുമിഹ
കൈകൂപ്പി വീണുടനിരക്കുന്നു നാഥനൊടു
ഏകാന്തഭക്തിയകമേ വന്നുദിപ്പതിനു
വൈകുന്നതെന്തു ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

24. ഏകാന്തയോഗികളാംകാംക്ഷകൊണ്ടു പര-
മേകാന്തമെന്ന വഴി പോകുന്നിതെൻ മനവും
കാകൻ പറന്നു പുനരന്നങ്ങൾ പോയ വഴി
പോകുന്നപോലെ ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

25. ഐയ്യഞ്ചുമഞ്ചുമുടനയ്യാറുമെട്ടുമുട-
നവ്വണ്ണമെട്ടുമുടനെൺമൂന്നുമേഴുമഥ
ചൊവ്വോടൊരഞ്ചുമപി രണ്ടൊന്നു തത്ത്വമതിൽ
മേവുന്ന നാഥ ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

26. ഓതുന്ന ഗീതകളിതെല്ലാമതെന്ന പൊരുൾ
ഏതെന്നു കാൺമതിനു പോരാ മനോബലവും
ഏതെങ്കിലും കിമപി കാരുണ്യമിന്നു തവ
സാധിക്കവേണ്ടു ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

27. ഔദുംബരത്തിൽ മശകത്തിന്നു തോന്നുമിതിൻ
മീതേ കദാപി സുഖമില്ലെന്നു തത്പരിചു
ചേതോവിമോഹിനി മയക്കായ്ക മായ തവ
ദേഹോഹമെന്ന വഴി ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

28. അംഭോജസംഭവനുമമ്പോടു നീന്തി ബത
വന്മോഹവാരിധിയിലെന്നോടമോർത്തു മമ
വൻപേടി പാരമിവനമ്പോടടായ്‌വതിനു
മുമ്പേ തൊഴാമടികൾ നാരായണായ നമ:

29. അപ്പാശവും വടിയുമായ്ക്കൊണ്ടജാമിളനെ
മുല്പാടു ചെന്നു കയറിട്ടോരു കിങ്കരരെ
പില്പാടു ചെന്നഥ തടുത്തോരു നാല്‌വരെയു-
മപ്പോലെ നൗമി ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

30. കഷ്ടം ഭവാനെയൊരു പാണ്ഡ്യൻ ഭജിച്ചള-
വഗസ്ത്യേന നീ ബത ശപിപ്പിച്ചതെന്തിനിഹ,
നക്രേണ കാല്ക്കഥ കടിപ്പിച്ചതെന്തിനിതു-
മോർക്കാവതല്ല ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

31. ഖട്വാംഗനെന്ന ധരണീശന്നു കാൺകൊരു മു-
ഹൂർത്തേന നീ ഗതികൊടുപ്പാനുമെന്തു വിധി

ഒട്ടല്ല നിൻ കളികളിപ്പോലെ തങ്ങളിൽ വി-
രുദ്ധങ്ങളായവകൾ നാരായണായ നമ:

32. ഗർവ്വിച്ചു വന്നൊരു ജരാസന്ധനോടു യുധി
ചൊവ്വോടു നില്പതിനു പോരാ നിനക്കു ബലം!
അവ്വാരിധൗ ദഹനബാണം തൊടുത്തതു തി-
ളപ്പിപ്പതിന്നു മതി നാരായണായ നമ:

33. ഘർമ്മാതപം കുളിർനിലാവെന്നു തമ്പിയൊടു
ചെമ്മേ പറഞ്ഞു നിജപത്നീം പിരിഞ്ഞളവ്
തന്നെപ്പിരിഞ്ഞു മറുകിച്ചാ മൃഗാക്ഷികളെ
വൃന്ദാവനത്തിലഥ നാരായണായ നമ:

34. ങാനം കണക്കെയുടനഞ്ചക്ഷരങ്ങളുടെ-
യൂനം വരുത്തിയൊരു നക്തഞ്ചരിക്കു ബത!
കൂന്നോരു ദാസിയെ മനോജ്ഞാംഗിയാക്കിയതു-
മൊന്നല്ലെയാളു ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

35. ചമ്മട്ടിപൂണ്ടു കടിഞ്ഞാണും മുറുക്കിയുട-
നിന്ദ്രാത്മജന്നു യുധി തേർപൂട്ടിനിന്നു ബത!
ചെമ്മേ മറഞ്ഞൊരു ശരംകൊണ്ടു കൊന്നതു-
മൊരിന്ദ്രാത്മജന്നെ! ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

36. ഛന്നത്വമാർന്ന കനൽപോലെ നിറഞ്ഞുലകിൽ
ചിന്നുന്ന നിൻ മഹിമയാർക്കും തിരിക്കരുത്
അന്നന്നു കണ്ടതിനെ വാഴ്ത്തുന്നു മാമുനിക-
ളെന്നത്രെ തോന്നി ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

37. ജന്തുക്കളുള്ളിൽ വിലസീടുന്ന നിന്നുടയ
ബന്ധം വിടാതെ പരിപൂർണ്ണാത്മനാ സതതം
തന്തൌ മണിപ്രകരഭേദങ്ങൾപോലെ പര-
മെന്തെന്തു ജാതമിഹ നാരായണായ നമ:

38. ഝംകാരനാദമിവ യോഗീന്ദ്രരുള്ളിലുമൊ-
രോതുന്ന ഗീതകളിലും പാൽപയോധിയിലും
ആകാശവീഥിയിലുമൊന്നായ് നിറഞ്ഞരുളു-
മാനന്ദരൂപ ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

39. ഞാനെന്നുമീശ്വരനിതെന്നും വളർന്നളവു
ജ്ഞാനദ്വയങ്ങൾ പലതുണ്ടായതിന്നു മഹാ-
മോഹം നിമിത്തമിതു പോകുംപ്രകാരമതു
ചേതസ്സിലാക മമ നാരായണായ നമ:

40. ടങ്കം കുരംഗവുമെടുത്തിട്ടു പാതിയുടൽ,
ശങ്ഖം രഥാംഗവുമെടുത്തിട്ടു പാതിയുടൽ
ഏകാക്ഷരം തവ ഹി രൂപം നിനപ്പവനു
പോകുന്നു മോഹവഴി നാരായണായ നമ:

41. ഠായങ്ങൾ ഗീതമിവ നാദപ്രയോഗമുട-
നേകശ്രുതിങ്കലൊരുമിക്കുന്നപോലെ പര
ഏകാക്ഷരത്തിലൊടുങ്ങുന്നു സർവ്വവുമി
താകാശസൂക്ഷ്മതനു നാരായണായ നമ:

42. ഡംഭാദിദോഷമുടനെട്ടും കളഞ്ഞു ഹൃദി
മുമ്പേ നിജാസനമുറച്ചേകനാഡിയുടെ
കമ്പം കളഞ്ഞു നിലയാറും കടപ്പതിനു
തുമ്പങ്ങൾ തീർക്ക ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

43. ഢക്കാമൃദംഗതുടിതാളങ്ങൾപോലെയുട-
നോർക്കാമിതന്നിലയിലെന്നേടമോർത്തു മമ
നില്ക്കുന്നതില്ല മനമാളാനബദ്ധകരി
തീൻകണ്ടപോലെ ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

44. ണത്വംവരും പരിചു കർമ്മവ്യപായമിഹ
മദ്ധ്യേ ഭവിക്കിലുമതല്ലെങ്കിലും കിമപി
തത്ത്വാദിയിൽ പരമുദിച്ചോരു ബോധമതു
ചിത്തേ വരേണ്ടതിഹ നാരായണായ നമ:

45. തത്ത്വാർത്ഥമിത്ഥമഖിലത്തിന്നുമൊന്നു ബത
ശബ്ദങ്ങളുള്ളിൽ വിലസീടുന്ന നിന്നടിയിൽ
മുക്തിക്കു കാരണമിതേ ശബ്ദമെന്നു തവ
വാക്യങ്ങൾതന്നെ ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

46. ഥല്ലിന്നുമീതെ പരമില്ലെന്നുമോർത്തുമുട-
നെല്ലാരൊടും കുതറി വാപേശിയും സപദി
തള്ളിപ്പുറപ്പെടുമഹംബുദ്ധികൊണ്ടു ബത
കൊല്ലുന്നു നീ ചിലരെ നാരായണായ നമ:

47. ദംഭായ വൻമരമതിനുള്ളിൽനിന്നു ചില
കൊമ്പും തളിർത്തവധിയില്ലാത്ത കായ്കനികൾ
അമ്പോടതിന്നരികിൽ വാഴായ്‌വതിന്നു ഗതി
നിൻപാദഭക്തി ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

48. ധന്യോഽഹമെന്നുമതിമാന്യോഽഹമെന്നുമതി-
പുണ്യങ്ങൾ ചെയ്ത പുരുഷൻ ഞാനിതുതെന്നുമിതി
ഒന്നല്ല കാൺകൊരു കൊടുങ്കാടു ദന്തിമയ_
മൊന്നിച്ചുകൂടിയതു നാരായണായ നമ:

49. നന്നായ്ഗതിക്കൊരു സഹസ്രാരധാരയില-
തന്നീറ്റിൽ നിൻകരുണ വൻമാരിപെയ്തു പുന:
മുന്നം മുളച്ച മുള ഭക്തിക്കു വാഴ്ത്തുവതു-
മിന്നേ കൃപാനിലയ നാരായണായ നമ:

50. പലതും പറഞ്ഞു പകൽ കളയുന്ന നാവു തവ
തിരുനാമകീർത്തനമിതതിനായ് വരേണമിഹ
കളയായ്ക കാലമിതിലതുകൊണ്ടു മോക്ഷഗതി
എളുതെന്നു കേൾപ്പു ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

51. ഏലമില്ലയാതെ മമ വശമാക്കൊലാ ജഗതി
മലമൂത്രമായ തടി പലനാളിരുത്തിയുടൻ
അളവില്ലയാതെ വെളിവകമേയുദിപ്പതിനു
കളയാതെ കാലമിഹ നാരായണായ നമ:

52. ബന്ധുക്കളർത്ഥഗൃഹപുത്രാദിജന്മമതിൽ
ബന്ധിച്ചുനിന്നുലകിൽ നിൻതത്ത്വമോർക്കിലുമി-
തന്ധന്നു കാട്ടിയൊരു കണ്ണാടിപോലെ പുന-
രെന്നാക്കിടൊല്ല ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

53. ഭക്ഷിപ്പതിന്നു ഗുഹപോലെ പിളർന്നു മുഖ-
മയ്യോ! കൃതാന്തനിഹ പിമ്പേ നടന്നു മമ
എത്തുന്നു ദർദുരമുരത്തോടെ പിമ്പെയൊരു
സർപ്പംകണക്കെ ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

54. മന്നിങ്കൽ വന്നിഹ പിറന്നന്നുതൊട്ടു പുന-
രെന്തോന്നു വാങ്മനസുകായങ്ങൾ ചെയ്തതു-

മെന്തിന്നിമേലിലതുമെല്ലാം നിനക്കു ഹൃദി
സന്തോഷമായ് വരിക നാരായണായ നമ:

55. യാതൊന്നു കാൺമതതു നാരായണ പ്രതിമ
യാതൊന്നു കേൾപ്പതതു നാരായണ ശ്രുതികൾ
യാതൊന്നു ചെയ്‌വതതു നാരായണാർച്ചനകൾ
യാതൊന്നതൊക്കെ ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

56. രവികോടിതുല്യമൊരു ചക്രം കരത്തിലിഹ
ഫണിരാജനെപ്പൊഴുമിരിപ്പാൻ കിടപ്പതിനും
അണിയുന്നതൊക്കെ വനമാലാദികൗസ്തുഭവു-
മകമേ ഭവിപ്പതിനു നാരായണായ നമ:

57. ലക്ഷംപ്രകാരമൊടു സൃഷ്ടിപ്പതിന്നുമതു
രക്ഷിപ്പതിന്നുമതു ശിക്ഷിപ്പതിന്നുമിഹ
വിക്ഷേപമാവരണമീ രണ്ടു ശക്തികള-
തിങ്കേന്നുദിച്ചു ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

58. വദനം നമുക്കു ശിഖി, വസനങ്ങൾ സന്ധ്യകളു-
മുദരം നമുക്കുദധിയുലകേഴുരണ്ടുമിഹ
ഭവനം നമുക്കു ശിവ,നേത്രങ്ങൾ രാത്രിപകൽ
അകമേ ഭവിപ്പതിനു നാരായണായ നമ:

59. ശക്തിക്കുതക്ക വഴിയിത്ഥം ഭജിപ്പവനെ
ഭക്ത്യാ വിദേഹദൃഢവിശ്വാസമോടുമഥ,
ഭക്ത്യാ കടന്നു തവ തൃക്കാൽ പിടിപ്പതിന-
യയ്ക്കുന്നതെന്നു ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

60. ഷഡ്വൈരികൾക്കു വിളയാട്ടത്തിനാക്കരുതു
ചിത്താംബുജം ഹി തവ ആസ്ഥാന രംഗമത്
തത്രാപി നിത്യവുമൊരിക്കലിരുന്നരുൾക
ചിത്താംബുജേ മമ ച നാരായണായ നമ:

61. സത്യം വദാമി മമ ഭൃത്യാദിവർഗ്ഗമതു-
മർത്ഥം കളത്രഗൃഹപുത്രാദിജാലമതും
ഒക്കെ ത്വദർപ്പണമതാക്കീട്ടു ഞാനുമിഹ
തൃക്കാൽക്കൽ വീണു ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

62. ഹരനും വിരിഞ്ചനുമിതമരാധിനായകനു-
മറിയുന്നതില്ല തവ മറിയായതൻമഹിമ
അറിവായ്മുതൽ കരളിലൊരുപോലെ നിന്നരുളും
പര, ജീവനിൽ തെളിക നാരായണായ നമ:

63. ളത്വം കലർന്നിതു ലകാരത്തിനപ്പരിചു
തത്ത്വം നിനയ്ക്കിലൊരു ദിവ്യത്വമുണ്ടു തവ,
കത്തുന്ന പൊന്മണിവിളക്കെന്നപോലെ ഹൃദി
നില്ക്കുന്ന നാഥ ഹരി നാരായണായ നമ:

64. ക്ഷരിയായൊരക്ഷരമതിങ്കേന്നുദിച്ചതിതു
ലിപിയേഴുമക്ഷരമിതെന്നങ്ങുരപ്പു ജനം
അറിയാവതല്ല തവ പരമാക്ഷരസ്യ പൊരുൾ
അറിയാറുമായ് വരിക നാരായണായ നമ:

65. കരുണാപയോധി മമ ഗുരുനാഥനിസ്തുതിയെ
വിരവോടു പാർത്തു പിഴ വഴിപോലെ തീർത്തരുൾക
ദുരിതാബ്ധിതൻനടുവിൽ മറിയുന്നവർക്കു പര-
മൊരു പോതമായ്‌വരിക നാരായണായ നമ:

66. മദമത്സരാദികൾ മനസ്സിൽ തൊടാതെ ദിന-
മിതുകൊണ്ടു വാഴ്ത്തുക നമുക്കും ഗതിക്കു വഴി
ഇതു കേൾക്കതാനിതൊരു മൊഴിതാൻ പഠിപ്പവനും
പതിയാ ഭവാംബുധിയിൽ നാരായണായ നമ:

ANNEXURE A-II
HARINAAMAKIRTANAM IN *DEVANAAGARI* SCRIPT

१. ओङ्कारमाय पोरुळ् मून्नाय् पिरिञ्ञुटने-
याङ्कारमायतिनु तान् तन्ने साक्षियतु
बोधं वरुत्तुवतिनाळायि निन्न पर-
माचार्यरूप हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

२. ओन्नाय निन्नेयिह रण्टेन्नु कण्टळवि-
लुण्टायोरिण्टल् वत मिण्टावतल्ल मम
पण्टेक्कणक्के वरुवान् निन् कृपावलिक-
ळुण्टाक वेणमिह नारायणाय नमः ।

३. आनन्द चिन्मय हरे ! गोपिका रमण !
ञानेन्न भावमतु तोन्नायक वेणमिह
तोन्नुन्नताकिलखिलं ञानितेन्न वषि
तोन्नेणमे वरद नारायणाय नमः ।

४. अर्क्कानलादिवेळिवोक्के ग्रहिक्कुमोरु
कण्णिन्नु कण्णु मनमाकुन्न कण्णतिनु
कण्णायिरुन्न पोरुल् तानेन्नुरय्क्कुमळ-
वानन्दमेन्तु ! हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

५. हरि नाम कीर्त्तनमितुरचेय्वतिन्नु गुरु-
वरुळाले देवकळुमरुळचेय्क भूसुररुमं
नरनाय् जनिच्चु भुवि मरणं भविप्पळवु-
मुरचेय्वतिन्नरुळक नारायणाय नमः ।

६. श्रीमूलमाय प्रकृतीङ्कल् तुटङ्ङि जन-
नान्त्यत्तोळं परमहामायतन्टे गति
जन्मङ्ङळुं पल कषिञ्ञालु मिल्लवधि
कर्म्मत्तिनुं, परम नारायणाय नमः ।

७. गर्भस्थनाय् भुवि जनिच्चुं मरिच्चुमुद-
कप्पोळपोले जननान्त्येन नित्यगति
त्वद्भक्ति वर्द्धनमुदिक्केणमेन् मनसि
नित्यं तोषाय् वरिक, नारायणाय नमः ।

८. णत्तारिल् मानिनिमणाळन् पुराणपुरुषन्
भक्त वत्सलनन्तादिहीननपि
चित्तत्तिलच्युत कळिप्पन्तलिट्टु विळ-
याडीडुकेन्मनसि नारायणाय नमः ।

९. पच्चक्किळिप्पंविष पाल्वर्णमोत्त निर-
मिच्छिप्पवर्क्कु पडाधारं कटन्नुपरि
विश्वस्थितिप्रळयसृष्टिक्कु सत्त्वरज-
स्तमोभेदरूप हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

१०. तत्वत्तिनुळ्ळिलुदयं चेय्तिटुन्न पोरु-
ळेत्तीटुवान् गुरुपदान्ते भजिप्पवनु
मुक्तिक्कु तक्कोरुपदेशं तरुं जनन-
मट्टीटुमन्नवनु नारायणाय नमः ।

११. एन्पापमोक्केयरिवान् चित्रगुप्तनुटे
सम्पूर्णलिख्यितगिरं केट्टु धर्म्मपति
एन् पक्कलुळ्ळ् दुरितं पार्त्तु काणुमळ-
वंभोरुहाक्ष तुण, नारायणाय नमः ।

१२. नक्षत्रपङ्क्तिकळुमिन्दुप्रकाशवु-
मोळिक्कुं, दिवाकरनुदिच्चङ्ङुयर्न्नळवु
पक्षीगणं गरुडनेक्कण्टु कैतोपुतु
रक्षिक्कयेन्नटिम नारायाणाय नमः ।

१३. मत् प्राणनुं परनुमोन्नेन्नुरप्पवनु
तत्प्राणदेहवुमनित्यं कळत्रधनं
स्वप्नादियिल् पलतु कण्डिड्डुणर्न्नवनो-
टोप्पं ग्रहिक्क, हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

१४. अन्पेणमेन् मनसि श्रीनीलकण्ठगुरु -
वंभोरुहाक्षंमिति वाळ्त्तुन्नतिन्नुमिह
अन्पत्तोरक्षरवुमोरोन्नितेन्मोळियि-
लन्पोटु चेर्क्क हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

१५. आद्याक्षरत्तिलुळवायोन्नितोक्केयुमि-
ताद्याक्षरत्तिलितटङ्ङुन्नतुं करुति

आद्याक्षरालिवयिलोरोन्नेटुत्तु परि-
कीर्त्तिप्पतिन्नरुळ्क नारायणाय नमः ।

१६. इक्कण्ट विश्वमतु मिन्द्रादि देवकळु-
मर्क्केन्दुवह्निकळोटोप्पं त्रिमूर्त्तिकळुम्
अग्रे विराट्पुरुष निन् मूलमक्षरवु-
मोक्कोर्यु वरेणमिह नारायणाय नमः ।

१७. ई वन्न मोहमकलेप्पोवतिन्नु पुन-
रीवण्णमुळ्ळोरुपदेशङ्ङळिल्लुलकिल
जीवन्नु कृष्ण हरि गोविन्द राम तिरु-
नामङ्ङळोन्नोळिके नारायणाय नमः ।

१८. उळ्ळिलुकनत्त मद मात्सर्य मेन्निवक-
ळुळ्ळोरु कालमुटनेन्नाकिलुं मनसि
चोल्लुन्नतारु तिरुनामङ्ङळन्नवनु
नल्लू गतिक्कु वषि नारायणाय नमः ।

१९. ऊरिन्नु वेण्ट चिल भारङ्ङळ् वेण्टतिनु
नीरिन्नु वेण्ट निजदारङ्ङळ् वेण्टतिनु
नारायणाच्युत हरेएन्नतिन्नोरुवर
नावोन्ने वेण्टु हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

२०. ऋतुवाय पेण्णिनुमिरप्पवनुं दाहकनुंम्
पतितन्नु मग्नियजनं चेय्त भूसुरनुम्
हरिनामकीर्त्तनमतोरुनाळुमार्क्कुमुट-
नरुतात्ततल्ल हरि नारायणाय नमः

२१. ॠभोषनेन्नु चिलर् भाषिक्किलुं, चिलर्क-
ळिप्पापियेन्नु परयुन्नाकिलुं मनसि
आवो नमुक्कु तिरियायेन्नुरच्चु तिरु-
नामङ्ङळं चोल्क हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

२२. लुझ्मादि चेर्त्तोरु पोरुत्तं निनय्क्किलुमि-
तजितन्टे नामगुणमतिनिङ्ङु वेण्टु दृढम्
ओरु कोटि कोटि तव तिरुनाममुल्लवयि-
लरुतात्ततिल्ल हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

२३. लुकारमादि मुतलायिट्टु ञानुमिह
कैकूप्पि वीणुटनिरक्कुन्नु नाथनोटु
एकान्त भक्तियकमे वन्नुदिप्पतिनु
वैकुन्नतेन्तु हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

२४. एकान्त योगिकळाकांक्ष कोण्टु पर-
मेकान्तमेन्न वपि पोकुन्नितेन् मनवुम्
काकन् परन्नु पुनरन्नङ्ङळ् पोयवपि
पोकुन्नपोले हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

२५. ऐयञ्चुमञ्चुमुटनय्यारुमेट्टुमुट-
नव्वण्णमेट्टुमुटनेण्मून्नु मेपुमथ
चोव्वोटरञ्चुमपि रण्टोन्नु तत्त्वमतिल्-
मेवुन्न नाथ हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

२६. ओतुन्न गीतकळितेल्लामतेन्न पोरुळ्
एतेन्नु काण्मतिनु पोरा मनोवलवुम्
एन्तेङ्किलुं किमपि कारुण्यमिन्नु तव
साधिक्कवेण्टु हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

२७. औदुंबरत्तिल् मशकत्तिन्नु तोन्नुमितिन्
मीते कदापि सुखमिल्लेन्नु तत्परिचु
चेतोविमोहिनि मयक्कायक मायतव
देहोऽमेन्न वपि नारायाणाय नमः ।

२८. अंभोज संभवनुमम्पोटु नीन्ति वत-
वन्मोहवारिधियिलेन्नेटमोर्त्तु मम
वन्पेटि पारमिवनन्पोटटाय्वतिनु
मुम्पे तोपामटिकळ् नारायणाय नमः ।

२९. अप्पाशवुं वटियुमाय्क्कोण्टजामिळने
मुल्पाटु चेन्नु कयरिट्टोरु किंकररे
पिलपाटु चेन्नथ तटुत्तोरु नाल्वरेयु-
मप्पोले नौमि हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

३०. कष्टं भवानेयोरु पाण्ड्यन् भजिच्चळ-
वगस्त्येन नी बत ! शपिप्पिच्चतेन्तिनिह

नक्रेण काल्क्कलथ कटिप्पिच्चतेन्तिनितु-
मोक्कविलतल्ल हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

३१. खट्वांगनेन्न धरणीशन्नु काणकोरुमु-
हूर्त्तेन नी गति कोटुप्पानुमेन्तु विधि
ओट्टल्ल निन् कळिकळिप्पोले तङ्ङळिल् वि-
रुद्धङ्ङळायवकळ् नारायणाय नमः ।

३२. गर्विच्चु वन्नोरु जरासंधनोटु युधि
चोव्वोटु निल्पतिनु पोरा निनक्कु बलम्
अव्वारिधौ दहनबाणं तोटुत्ततु ति-
ळप्पिप्पतिन्नु मति नारायणाय नमः ।

३३. धर्मातपं कुळिर् निलावेन्नु तम्पियोटु
चेम्मे परञ्ञु निज पत्नीं पिरिञ्ञळवु
तन्नेप्पिरिञ्ञु मरुकिच्चा मृगाक्षिकळे
वृन्दावनत्तिलथ नारायणाय नमः ।

३४. ज्ञानं कणक्केयुटनञ्चक्षरङ्ङळुटे-
यूनं वरुत्तियोरु नक्तंचरिक्कु बत
कून्नोरु दासिये मनोज्भांगियाक्कियतु-
मोन्नल्लेयाळु हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

३५. चम्मट्टिट पूण्टु कटिञ्ञाणुं मुरूक्कियुट-
निन्द्रात्मजन्नु युधि तेर् पूट्टिट निन्नु बत !
चेम्मे मरञ्ञोरू शरं कोण्टु कोन्नतु-
मोरिन्द्रात्मजन्ने हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

३६. छन्नत्वमान्न कनल् पोले निरञ्ञुलकिल्
मिन्नुन्न निन् महिमयाक्कुं तिरिक्करुतु
अन्नन्नु कण्मतिने वाषुत्तुन्नु मामुनिक-
ळेन्नत्रे तोन्नि हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

३७. जन्तुक्कळुळ्ळिल् विलसीटुन्न निन्नुटय
बन्धं विटाते परिपूर्णात्मना सततम्
तन्तौ मणिप्रकरभेदङ्ङळू पोले पर-
मेन्तेन्तु जातमिह नारायणाय नमः ।

३८. झंकारनादमिव योगीन्द्ररुळ्ळिलुमो-
रोतुन्न गीतकळिलुं पाल्पयोधियिलुम्
आकाश विथियिलुमोन्नाय् निरञ्ञरुळु-
मानन्द रूप हरी नारायणाय नमः ।

३९. ञानेन्नुमीश्वरनितेन्नुं तिरिञ्ञळवु
ज्ञानद्वयङ्ङल् पलतुण्टावतिन्नु महा-
मोहं निमित्तमतु पोकुं प्रकारमतु -
चेतस्सिलाक मम; नारायणाय नमः ।

४०. टङ्कं कुरङ्गवुमेटुत्तिट्टु पातियुटल्
शंखुं रथांगवुमेटुत्तिट्टु पातियुटल्
एकाक्षरं तव हि रूपं निनप्पवनु
पोकुन्नु मोहवपि, नारायणाय नमः ।

४१. ठायङ्ङळ् गीतमिव नाद्प्रयोगमुट-
नेकश्रुतीङ्कलोरुमिक्कुन्न पोले परम्
एकाक्षरत्तिलितटङ्ङुन्नु सर्व्ववुमि-
ताकाशसूक्ष्मतनु नारायणाय नमः ।

४२. डंभादि दोषमुटनेट्टुं कळञ्ञु हृदि
मुम्पे निजासनमुरच्चेकनाडियुटे
कम्पं कळञ्ञु निलयारुं कटप्पतिनु
तुम्पङ्ङळ् तीर्क्क हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

४३. ढक्कामृदंग तुटि ताळङ्ङळ् पोलेयुट-
नोर्क्कामितन्निलयिलेन्नेट मोर्त्तु मम
निलक्कुन्नतिल्ल मनमाळानवद्धकरि
तीन् कण्टपोले हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

४४. णत्वा परं परिचु कर्म्मव्यपायमिह
मद्ध्ये भविक्किलु मतल्लेंकिलुं किमपि
तत्त्वादियिल् परमुदिच्चोरु बोधमतु-
चित्ते वरेण्टतिह नारायणाय नमः ।

४५. तत्त्वार्थमित्थमखिलत्तिन्नुमोन्नु बत,
शब्दङ्ङळुळ्ळिल् विलसीटुन्न निन्नटियिल्

मुक्तिक्कु कारणमिते शव्दमेन्नु तव
वाक्यङ्ङळ् तन्ने, हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

४६. थल्लिन्नुमीते परमिल्लेन्नुमोर्त्तुमुट-
नेल्लारोटुं कुतरि वापेशियुं सपदि
तळ्ळिप्पुरप्पेटुमहंवुद्धि कोण्टु वत
कोल्लुन्नु नी चिलरे नारायणाय नमः ।

४७. दंभाय वन्मरमतिन्नुळ्ळिल्निन्नु चिल
कोम्पुं तळिर्त्तवधियिल्लात्त काय्कनिकळ
अम्पोटतिन्नरिकिल् वाप्ाय्वतिन्नु गति
निन् पाद भक्ति हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

४८. धन्योऽहमेन्नु मति मन्योऽहमेन्नु मति
पुण्यङ्ङळ् चेय्त पुरुपन् ञानितेन्नुमिति
ओन्नल्ल काण्कोरु कोटुंकाटु दन्तिमय-
मोन्निच्चुकूटियतु नारायणाय नमः ।

४९. नन्नाय् गतिक्कोरु सहस्रारधारयिल-
तन्नीट्टिल् निन् करुण वन्मारि पेय्तु पुनः
मुन्नं मुळच्च मुळ भक्तिक्कु वाप्त्तुवतु-
मिन्ने कृपानिलय नारायणाय नमः ।

५०. पलतुं परञ्ञु पकल् कळयुन्न नावु तव
तिरुनामकीर्त्तनमितत्तिनाय् वरेणमिह
कलियाय कालमितिलतुकोण्टु मोक्षगति-
येळुतेन्नु केळ्प्पु हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

५१. फलमिल्लयाते मम वशमाक्कोला जगति
मलमूत्रमाय तटि पलनाळिरुत्तियुटन्
अळविल्लयाते वेळिवकमेयुदिप्पतिनु
कळयाते कालमिह नारायणाय नमः ।

५२. वन्धुक्कळर्त्थगृहपुत्रादिजन्ममतिल्
वन्धिच्चु निन्नुलकिल् निन्तत्त्वमोर्क्किलुमि-
तन्धन्नु काट्टियोरु कण्णाटि पोले पुन-
रेन्नाक्किटोल्ला हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

५३. भक्षिप्पतिन्नु गुहपोले पिळर्न्नु मुख-
मय्यो ! कृतान्तनिह पिन्पे नटन्नु मम
एत्तुन्न दर्दुरमुरत्तोटे पिन्पेयोरु
सर्प्पं कणक्के हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

५४. मन्निङ्कल् वन्निह पिरन्नन्नुतोट्टु पुन-
रेन्तोन्नु वाङ्मनसुकायङ्ङळ् चेय्तेतु-
मेन्तिन्निमेलिलतुमेल्लां निनक्कु हृदि
सन्तोषमाय् वरिक नारायणाय नमः ।

५५. यातोन्नु काणंमततु नारायण प्रतिम
यातोन्नु केळ्प्पततु नारायणश्रुतिकळ्
यातोन्नु चेय्वततु नारायणार्चनकळ्
यातोन्नतोक्के हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

५६. रविकोटितुल्यमोरु चक्रं करत्तिलिह
फणिराजनेप्पोवुमिरिप्पान् किटप्पतिनुम्
अणियुन्नतोक्के वनमालादि कौस्तुभवु-
मकमे भविप्पतिनु नारायणाय नमः ।

५७. लक्षंप्रकारमोटु सृष्टिप्पतिन्नुमतु
रक्षिप्पतिन्नुमतु शिक्षिप्पतिन्नुमिह
विक्षेपमावरणमी रण्टु शक्तिकळ-
तिङ्केन्नुदिच्चु हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

५८. वदनं नमुक्कु शिखि, वसनङ्ङळ् सन्ध्यकळु-
मुदरं नमुक्कुदधि, उलकेषु रण्टुमिह
भवनं नमुक्कु शिव, नेत्रङ्ङळ् रात्रि पकल्
अकमे भविप्पतिनु नारायणाय नमः ।

५९. शक्तिक्कु तक्क वपियित्थं भजिप्पवने
भक्त्या विदेहदृढविश्वासमोटु मथ
भक्त्या कटन्नु तव तृक्काल् पिटिप्पतिन-
ययक्कुन्नतेन्नु हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

६०. षड्वैरिकळक्कु विळयाट्टत्तिनाक्करुतु
चित्तांबुजं हि तव आस्थान रंगमतु

तत्रापि नित्यवुमोरिक्कलिरुन्नरुळक
चित्तांवुजे मम च नारायणाय नमः ।

६१. सत्यं वदामि मम भृत्यादिवर्गमतु-
मर्त्थं कळत्रगृह पुत्रादिजालमतुम्
ओक्के त्वदर्प्पणमतक्कीट्टु ञानुमिह
तृक्कालुक्कल् वीणु हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

६२. हरनुं विरिञ्चनुमितमरेन्द्रनायकनु-
मरियुन्नतिल्ल तव मरिमायतन्महिम
अरिवाय् मुतल करळिलोरु पोले निन्नरुळुम्
पर जीवनिल् तेळिक नारायणाय नमः ।

६३. ळत्वं कलर्न्नितु लकारत्तिन्नप्परिचु
तत्वं निनय्क्किलोरु दिव्यत्वमुण्टु तव,
कत्तुन्न पोन्मणि विळक्केन्नपोले हृदि
निलक्कुन्न नाथ हरि नारायणाय नमः ।

६४. क्षरियायोरक्षरमतिङ्क्केन्नुदिच्चतितु
लिपियेपुमक्षरमितेन्नङ्ङुरप्पु जनम्
अरियावतल्ल तव परमाक्षरस्य पोरुळ्
अरियारुमाय् वरिक नारायणाय नमः ।

६५. करुणापयोधि मम गुरुनाथनिस्तुतिये
विरवोटु पार्त्तु पिप वषिपोले तीर्त्तरुळ्क
दुरिताब्धि तन् नटुविल् मरियुन्नवर्क्कु पुन-
रोरु पोतमाय् वरिक नारायणाय नमः ।

६६. मदमत्सरादिकळ् मनस्सिल् तोटाते दिन-
मितुकोण्टु वाप्तुक नमुक्कुं गतिक्कु वपि
इतु केळ्क्क तानितोरु मोपितान् पठिप्पवनुम्
पतिया भवांवुधियिल् नारायणाय नमः ।

ANNEXURE - B
PRONUNCIATION OF *MALAYAALAM* ALPHABET

VOWELS	Near Equivalent in English
A	but
Aa	master
I	if
I	wheel
U	full
Oo	boost
Rri	ritual
Rro	(rarely in use)
Ie	(rarely in use)
loe	(rarely in use)
E	evade
E	rate
Ai	my
O	only
O	over
Au	now

CONSONANTS

K	kite
Kh	khaki
G	give
Gh	ghost
N	sing
C	chair
Ch	catch
J	joy
Jh	jhansi
Nja	vignette
T	touch (approximate)
Th	thirteen
D	dove
Dh	adhesive
Na	under
Ta	talisman
Th	authority
D	then

Dh	proudhon
N	nihilism
P	pump
Ph	physics
Ba	bird
Bh	abhor
M	mother
Y	yam
R	very
L	lad
V	avert
S	Shiva
S	show
S	six
H	hut
L	clever
Zh	versatile
Ra	pretty

GLOSSARY

Aachaarya	*Guru*; Spiritual teacher or preceptor
Aadhibhooutika	One of the three kinds of pains produced by extra-organic natural causes.
Aadhidaivikam	Super-natural; Above ordinary experience
Aadhyaatmikam	Of spiritual Nature
Aadi Shankara	The great Saint and *Vedaant*ist who lived in the 8th century A.D. and wrote several authentic books on *Vedaanta* during his short span of life.
Aajna	The sixth lotus of the *Yoga* teaching of *Patanjali*, situated in the centre of the brain in-between eye brows, used for divine perception.
Aananda	Bliss; Happiness; Joy in which distinction between the subject and the object ceases.
Aaranyaka	One of the principal categories of *Vedic* texts, which reveals a type of philosophical enquiry on the intricacies of life and universe.
Aasana	Yogic posture; Bodily posture assumed during meditation; The third step in *Patanjali*'s *Yoga* system; Seat.
Aatman	The Self, the inner Reality, which in the form of pure consciousness is manifested in every being.

Aavarana	Covering; Veil of ignorance; The outer sheath of the mind.
Abhaava	The principle of non-existence considered to be a negative category in the *Nyaaya-Vaisheshika* systems; Without qualities
Abhimaana	Pride; Egoism; Identification with body, mind and intellect
Advaita	Non-dualistic; Monistic
Aham Brahmaasmi	**I am *Brahman***; From *Yajur Veda*, one of the four *Mahaavaakya*s of the *Veda*s
Ahamkaara	Ego; Self-conceit; "I"-ness.
Akshara	Endless; Perpetual; Without destruction; A letter in the alphabet
Akshara Brahman	The supreme without destruction, *Brahman*, the eternal, represented in the form of alphabet.
Anaahata	The fourth lotus of the *Yoga* of *Patanjali*, situated in *Sushumna* directly in line with heart. It is conceived of as a 12 -petelled lotus; Seat of the element Air and the godess *Kaakini*.
Anaatma	Non-self; Insentient.
Anantam	Infinite
Ananya Bhakti	Single-pointed, unflinching devotion
Anu	Atom; Sub-atomic particle. The Indian concept of atomic theory evolved through *Nyaaya-Vaisheshika* schools.

Anumaana	Inference in the Indian logical system.
Apara	Lower: Term for material or mundane.
Ardhanaarishvara	The form of God depicted as half male and half female.
Arjuna	The *Paandava* king warrior of the *Hindu* Epic *Mahaabhaarata*; Friend and disciple of *Shri Krishna*. Krishna gave the divine message, *Bhagavad Gita,* to Arjuna in the battlefield of *Kurukshetra*.
Ashtaavakra	A towering scholar of the *Mahaabhaarata* period while still in his teens.
Asura	Demon; Evil tendency in man.
AUM	The holy sound *OM* symbolizing *Brahman*.
Avastha	State; Status.
Avidya	Ignorance; A term in *Vedaanta* philosophy denoting primal ignorance, individual or cosmic.According to the non-dualistic philosophy (*Vedaanta)* it is responsible for the illusion of multiplicity. Although the beginning of this ignorance cannot be traced, it comes to an end to a person when he attains self-knowledge.
Ayam Adyam Brahman	The second *Mahaavaakya* of the *Veda*s, **I am *Brahman***, occurring in *Adharva veda*.
Baali	The Monkey King, brother of *Sugriva* and son of *Devendra*, the King of gods, who was killed by Shri *Raama,* the seventh incarnation of *Vishnu*.

Balaraama	The elder brother of *Krishna*, also regarded as an incarnation of *Vishnu*.
Bhaagavata	The great epic written by the sage *Vyaasa* which contains *Bhagavad Gita*.
Bhagavat Gita	The well-known *Hindu* scripture which occurs in the *Bhishma Parva* of the *Mahaabhaarata*, written by the great sage *Vyaasa* containing 700 verses depicting the discourse between *Krishna* and *Arjuna*.
Bhajagovindam	The short lyric composed by *Shri Shankara* advising the grand old grammarian to pray to God instead of wasting time arguing on synthetic and analytic grammar.
Bhakti	Devotion; Ardent love of God; Faith in God and absolute surrender to Him.
Bhedavaada	The theory of Separateness; Lack of Unity; Of differences among insentients, *jeeva* and *brahman*.
Bhima	The second *Paandava* brother who was born of the Wind God, and excelled in physical powers
Bijaakshara	Seed letters like *Hrim* and *Krim;* These letters or sounds have well-defined meaningss and are rationally planned.
Braahmana	A member of the highest caste of India, a twice-born according to the *Hindu* faith; a person who has known *Brahma*.
Brahma	The Creator God (of the *Hindu* Trinity) of the all-pervasive phenomenal universe.

Brahma Jnaana	Knowledge of *Brahman.*
Chaaturvarnya	The four-fold community system in traditional Hinduism.
Chakra	Plexes; Centres of psychic energy in the human system.
Chatur yuga	The four aeons of *Satya, Dvaapara, Treta and Kali.*
Chitta	Mind stuff; The subtle elements from which mind is evolved or manifested.
Deha	Physical body; Gross matter.
Devendra	King of gods.
Dhaarana	Understanding; Concentration; Single-mindedness; The sixth step of *Patanjali*'s *Yoga.*
Dhananjaya	See *Arjuna.*
Dharma	Righteous way of living as enjoined by the sacred scriptures; Virtue; The path of right action; Duty.
Dhyaana	Meditation on the divine; The seventh step in *Patanjali Yoga.*
Duryodhana	The *Kaurava* King; Embodiment of power and greed.
Dvaita	The Dualistic School of Philosophy.
Dvesha	Hatred; Dislike; Aversion; Repulsion.
Ganga	The sacred river of India.

Garuda	The King of birds in Hindu mythology; The vehicle of *Vishnu*
Gautama	The founder of the *Nyaaya* School of Philosophy.
Gopis	Milk maids infatuated with Krishna; Female partners in *Krishna*'s frolics; The relationship between Krishna and *Gopi*s is conceived of in *Vaishnava* tradition as love – pure, sublime and non-sensual.
Govinda	One of the epithets of *Shri Krishna* and *Vishnu*.
Guna	Quality; The three modes of *Prakriti* or Nature; Qualities born of Nature- *satva*, *raja*s and *tama*s.
Guru	Great spiritual teacher.
Hari	One of the names of *Vishnu*.
Hata Yoga	A system of *Yoga* for gaining control over the physical body and vital energy.
Hata Yogi	A follower or practitioner of *Hata Yoga*.
Ida	The nerve-current situated on the left side of the spinal cord.
Ishta Devata	Chosen Deity
Jagat	The phenomenal world
Jaimini	The founder of the *Poorva Meemaamsa* Philosophy.
Janma	Birth; Life

Japa	Chanting of Sacred Names or Verses.
Jara	Wrinkles of old age.
Jaraasandha	The mighty King of *Magadha*, feared by all *Kshatriyas*, killed by *Bhima* in a thirteen-day, non-stop physical combat with *Shri Krishna* and *Arjuna* as witnesses.
Jijnaasa	Spiritual aspiration; The intensive yearning for truth.
Jiva	Individual life; Individual soul.
Jivaatma	The *Aatman* in its manifestatiomn of *jiva*; Individual soul.
Jivanmukta	Person liberated from the cycle of life and death, during this span of life itself.
Jnaana	Knowledge; Cognition; Wisdom of the Reality or *Brahman*.
Jnaana Kaanda	That portion of the *Vedic* texts which deals with Supreme Knowledge.
Jnaani	One who has realized Knowledge.
Kaali	The Divine Mother.
Kaama	Desire; Passion; Lust.
Kaarana	Cause; Source.
Kaliyuga	The last of the four aeons in the *Hindu* Mythological calendar; The others are *Satya*, *Dvaapara* and *Treta*.
Kamsa	*Krishna*'s uncle and son-in-law of *Jaraasandha*.

Kanaada	The founder of the *Vaisheshika* Philosophy.
Kapila	The founder of *Saankhya* Philosophy, the great teacher of evolution.
Karma	Action; The law that governs all action and its inevitable consequences on the doer.
Karma Kaanda	The theoretical division of the *Vedic* texts pertaining to rituals and sacrifices.
Karmaphala tyaaga	Renouncement of the fruits of action.
Karma Yoga	The *Yoga* of work or action; duty well performed without hope of reward.
Karna	A matchless warrior, son of Sun god *Surya* and *Kunti*.
Kerala	The God's own land, fabled as having been retrieved from the sea by the fifth incarnation of *Vishnu* (*Parashuraama*). Literally means the Land of Coconuts, located at the south-west corner of the Indian peninsula.
Kirtana	Devotional music; Laudatory recital; Praise of God.
Kosha	Sheath; A sheath enclosing the soul.
Krodha	Anger; Fury.
Kundalini	The subtle nerve energy; Psychic energy that lies dormant at the base of the spinal column, which when aroused develops psychic and spiritual powers of the practitioner.
Kurukshetra	The battlefield where the *Paandavas* and the *Kauravas* fought .

Lila	Play; Sport; The unexplainable ways of Providence.
Lobha	Greed; Covetousness.
Maadhvaachaarya	The great *Dvaita* philosopher and Saint.
Maarga	Way; Path of spiritual attainment; There are three *maargas* namely *Jnaana, Karma* and *Bhakti.*
Maatsarya	Rivalry; Jealousy. It is regarded as one of the six internal enemies of man.
Maaya	The power of *Brahman* to create Illusion; The unreal appearance of Nature; The phenomenal veil covering Truth; Nescience.
Mada	Haughtiness; Boastfulness, considered one of the six internal enemies of man.
Malayaalam	The language of Kerala.
Manana	Reflection; Constant and intensive thinking; Meditation on the eternal verities; One of the three stages of *Jnaana* yoga.
Manas	Mind; the deliberative or reasoning faculty of the mind; The central organ of perception according to *Saankhya*.
Manipooraka	The third lotus of the *Yoga* of *Patanjali* which is situated directly at the rear of the navel on the *Sushumna*, along the spinal column.
Mantra	Sacred syllables or words or sets of words through the repetition and reflection of which one attains realization of one's goal.

Moha — Attachment; Delusion; False identification and deluded attachment.It is regarded as one of the six internal enemies of man.

Moksha — Salvation; Emancipation; Freedom; Bliss.

Moolaadhaara — The basic or the first lotus of the *Yoga* of *Patanjali,* situated at the base of the spinal column, in which the *Kundalini* or the serpant power lies coiled up.

Mukti — Liberation; Deliverence from *Samsaara* or the Life Cycle.

Mumukshutvam — The state of the *Mumukshu,* a realized soul.

Naada Brahma — The sacred word AUM (OM) which was the first vibration in creation, conceived as *Brahman.*

Naamajapam — Chanting of the Lord's Name(s).

Naaraayana — *Vishnu.*

Neti, Neti — **Not this, Not this**; The term used by saints and *Aachaarya*s in describing THAT which is considered besides and beyond everything that is known as some thing or nothing.

Nidhidhyaasa — Profound and deep meditation. It is one of the three ways of *Jnaana yoga*, the other two being *Shravana* and *Manana*

Nirguna — Without attributes.

Nirguna Brahma — God without attributes.

Nitya — Permanent; Eternal.

Nirvaana	The state of deliverence or liberation from re-birth. A term frequently used by *Budhists* and *Hindus*. Absorbtion in the Divine; The free state of conciousness; Annihilation of passion, hatred and delusion.
Nirvikalpa Samaadhi	State of super-conciousness without modification of the mind; Without change in time; A lesser eternity; The superconcious state in which there is no mind nor the Triad - Knower, Known and Knowledge.
Nirvikaara	Unattached to emotion; Emotionless; Unruffled
Niyama	Religious duty consisting of internal and external purity, right thought, right action, contentment, avoidance of luxury, vanity and sensuousness, cultivation of good habits; performance of religious duty, etc. The second step in the *Yoga* of *Patanjali*.
Nyaaya	The philosophical system of *Gautama*.
Paandavas	The sons of *Pandu*, the brother of *Dritaraashtra*.
Padaartha	Object of knowledge or knowledge of realities according to *Vaiseshika* and are 7 in number; A category or ultimate classification.
Para	Supreme; The greatest; The highest.
Parabrahma	The Supreme; Absolute; Trancendental Reality.
Paramaatman	The Supreme Spirit.

Parikshit	The son of *Abhimanyu* and the grandson of the *Pandavas* who was crowned King after the *Kurukshetra* battle.
Patanjali	The founder of the *Yoga* system, who lived around 200 B.C.
Pingala	The right side nerve-current through the right nostril.
Pooja	Worship; Adoration; The ultimate purpose of *Pooja* is unification with God.
Poorvamimaamsa	Prior Investigations; one of the six major systems of *Hindu* philosophy.
Praana	Vital energy; Vital force; Life-breath.
Praanaayaama	The Science of Control of the *Praana*, life energy, principally by means of breath. It consists of *Rechaka*, *Pooraka* and *Kumbhaka*; A part of the *Yoga* discipline of *Patanjali*.
Prajnaanam Brahma	One of the four *Mahaavaakyas* of the *Vedas* meaning **Consciousness is *Brahman*** which occurs in *Rig Veda*.
Prakriti	Nature; Causal matter. One of the conceptions of the Universe advanced by the *Saankhya* philosophor, *Kapila*. The source of material and mental basis of the Universe as distinguished from the spiritual basis or *Purusha*.
Pranava	The sacred *Mantra* "AUM" (OM); The combination of three letters *a*, *u* and *m*, which represent the three *gunas* and are supposed to be embodied in *Vishnu*, *Brahma* and *Shiva*.

Prasaada	Thing prayerfully offered in homage to a Deity and then partaken by devotees as sacred; God's grace to the faithful; consecrated food.
Pratyaksha	Visible; Perceptible; The direct knowledge of objects produced by their relation to human senses.
Pratyaahaara	Abstraction or withdrawal of the senses from their objects; A part of the *Yoga* discipline of *Patanjali.*
Prema	Divine love.
Purusha	The Supreme Being, the Self which abides in the heart of all things; the Spiritual Principle.
Purushottama	Supreme God-head.
Raaga	Attachment of the senses; Attraction.
Raaja Yoga	The Royal *Yoga*, a form of *Yoga* advocated by the *Yoga* School of *Patanjali*, which has for its object the development of psychic and spiritual faculties and the control of the mind. It leads to *Nirvikalpasamaadhi*.
Raakshasa	Evil-minded strong Beings which dwell on the earth; Enemies of gods.
Raamaanuja	The sage-philosopher who was the ardent propounder of *Vishihtaadvaita* or qualified Non-Dualism.
Raamaayana	The great epic detailing the story of *Raama*, the 7th incarnation of *Vishnu*.

Raavana	The mythological King of *Lanka*, a *Raakshasa*, who abducted *Sita*, the consort of *Shri Raama*.
Rajas	Activity; Energy; Lively; One of the three *gunas* that give rise to wrath, greed, egoism, worldly activity, boastfulness and sense of power.
Ramana Maharshi	The great sage who lived in the 20th century in Tamil Nadu, India.
Rishi	Sage; Seer.
Saadhaka	Spiritual aspirant.
Saadhana	Spiritual Practice; Discipline.
Saankhya	The philosophy of *Kapila*; The system based on evolution.
Saatvic	Pure; Real; Noble.
Sachidaananda	The State of Existence in Knowledge and Bliss.
Saguna	With attributes; Possessing qualities.
Saguna Brahma	*Brahman* with qualities or attributes (as against *Nirguna* or without attributes).
Sahasraara	The cerebral region, the highest above all the *chakras* or nerve plexes where *Kundalini* meets its source. The thousand-petalled lotus flower situated in the brain described in the *Yoga Shaastra* of *Patanjali*.

Samaadhi	The state of super-consiousness at which absoluteness is experienced; A super-normal state produced by meditation; The 8th step of *Patanjali*'s *Yoga* system.
Samavaaya	The principle of coherence; A permanent or eternal relationship between two entities.
Samsaara	The world of phenomenal existence; Life through repeated births and deaths; Life in this phenomenal world as distinct from real existence which lies behind and below it.
Sankalpa	Imagination; Thought; Conceptualisation.
Sanyaasa	A life of absolute renunciation; The last of the four stages of life.
Satya	Truth; *Brahman*; Absolute.
Satyalokam	The land of Truth.
Shabda	Sound; Word; *Pranava* or AUM (OM).
Shad-darshana	The six schools of philosophy.
Shad-sampat	Six-fold virtues: *shama, dama, uparati, titiksha, shradha* and *shaanti*.
Shakti	Power; Energy; Force, Absolute power; Cosmic energy.
Shalya	Uncle of the *Paandavas*, who, because of having received hospitality from *Duryodhana*, went over to his side.
Shankara	See *Aadi Shankara*.
Shraddha	Concern; Involvement; Attention.

Shravana	Listening.
Shri Raamakrishna	The great sage and expounder of *Advaita Vedaanta* who lived in the 19th century in Calcutta.
Shruthi	Code of *Vedic* principles transmitted by word of mouth.
Shuka	The great sage, son of *Vyaasa*.
Smriti	Code of *Vedic* principles transmitted through societal memory.
Sushumna	The most important nerve, the psychic canal running through the centre of the spinal cord and through which the *Kundalini* ascends by *Yogic* practices.
Svaadhisthaana	The second six-petalled lotus of the *Yoga* system of *Patanjali*, situated at the back of the navel, in the *Sushumna*.
Taamasic	Pertaining to Vice; One of the three *gunas*; The *guna* of sloth, ignorance, stupidity and carelessness
Tapas	Meditation; Ascetic practices for controlling the mind, such as fasting and other self-imposed strict observances.
Tatva	The science of cosmic principles; Reality; Truth; Essential principle.
Tat Tvam Asi	**That Thou Art**; One of the four *Mahaavaakyas* of the *Vedas*; Occurs in
Saama Veda.	The concept of non-difference between *Jeeva* and *Brahman*.

Turiya	The highest state of conciousness; Superconcious state.
Uttaramimaamsa	The term applied to the *Vedaanta* philosophy, meaning *Subsequent Investigations* of *Veda*s.
Vaasana	Proclivity; Innate Tendency; Mind's Craving.
Vaisheshika	The system of *Hindu* philosophy founded by *Kanaada*, describing the earliest *Atomic theory*.
Vaishnavism	The denomination or sect of *Hindu*s who worship *Vishnu* and His Incarnations.
Varuna	The god of the Oceans.
Vedaanta	The ultimate in *Veda*s; the *Upanishad*s.
*Veda*s	Scriptures in four parts: *Rik, Yajur, Saama* and *Atharva*.
Veda Vyaasa	The great *Rishi Vyasa*, who partitioned *Veda*s into four; the author of *Mahaabhaarata* and of the aphorisms of the *Uttara Mimaamsa* or *Vedaanta*.
Vijnaana	Consciousness; Realization of the Self.
Vikshepa	Tossing of the mind; Projection of the mind.
Vishishtaadvaita	Qualified Non-Dualism.
Vishnu	Protector; Second of the Trinity of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*.
Vivekaananda	The disciple of *Shri Raamakrishna*, who introduced *Vedaanta* with all its greatness and glory to the West.

Yajna	Sacrifice; Ritualistic offering of dear objects to God with chanting of *Mantras* and prayers.
Yama	god of Death.
Yama	The first discipline of *Yoga;* Includes *Ahimsa, Satya, Brahmacharya* and *Aparigraha.*
Yantra	Symbol of Deity expressed in the form of diagrams or geometrical patterns fortified by *Mantras*.
Yoga	Union with God; A term meaning yoking or joining; Also means mental control and spiritual advancement, a term coined by the great sage *Patanjali.*
Vishuddha	The fifth lotus of the *Yoga* of *Patanjali,* situated in the *Sushumna* at the back of the throat.
Vritti	Activity; Profession.

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